

INSIDE: Sex, Porn & Feminism • Gulf War • AIDS • Philippines

BREAKTHROUGH

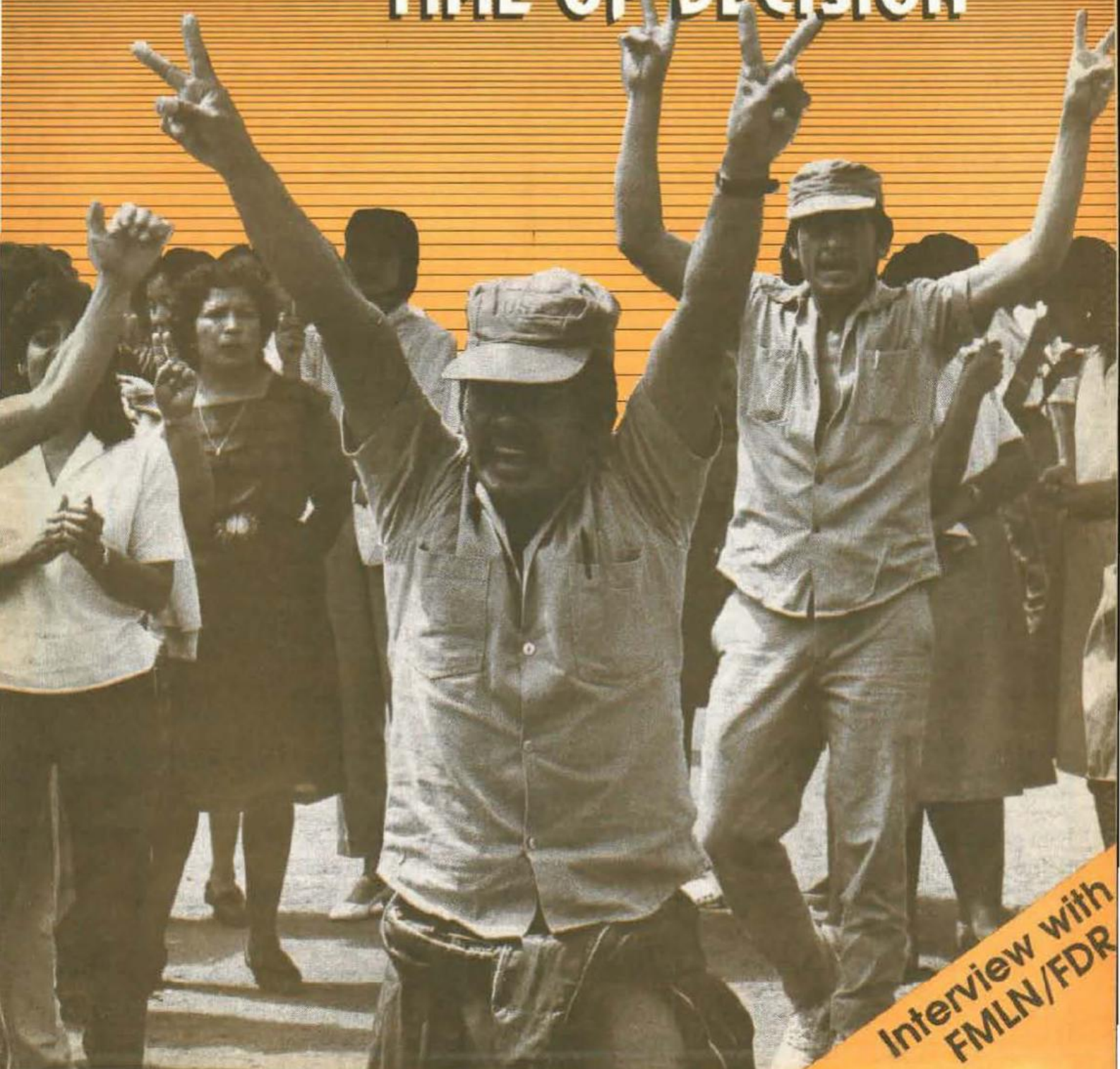
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El Salvador — TIME OF DECISION



Interview with
FMLN/FDR

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Leandro Alejandro 1959-1987

Lean's murderers could only have been those who hold it in their interest to crush the resurgent nationalist and democratic mass movement and stem growing protest against worsening social conditions.—Bayan, September 19, 1987

We join with progressive people around the world in condemning the assassination of Leandro Alejandro, leader of Bayan, the New Patriotic Confederation of the Philippines. We hold the U.S.-Aquino regime responsible for his murder. This issue is dedicated to the spirit of Lean Alejandro and the Filipino people in their struggle for peace, justice and sovereignty.

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Cover photo: Striking textile workers in San Salvador



AIDS. One of the most devastating epidemics in human history. Between 10 and 20 percent of the population of Central Africa are now infected. In the U.S., over 24,000 people have died already; by 1991, an estimated 250,000 people will be ill with the disease.

But AIDS is more than grim statistics. The AIDS crisis exposes the inhumanity of the society we live in. What kind of system stalls on preventive measures and education while the epidemic rips through the gay community? What kind of system sits back and watches while the continent of Africa is threatened with losing an entire generation? And what kind of mentality remains indifferent to the mounting casualties in Harlem and the South Bronx, because those dying are Black and Puerto Rican?

For those of us who are gay, we have been confronted with the harsh realities of death. Yet we have also found new strength. We have lost many of our friends, but we have found new value in life and humanity. And we are determined to resist.

Supposedly we live in a sophisticated society which understands modern medicine and disease—one with the most advanced technological equipment and knowledge. We're far beyond the time when plagues were thought to be cured by blood letting or burning down entire cities, as happened in the 14th century. Yet in many ways the reaction to AIDS bears more resemblance to those times than people would like to admit.

What does this mean in human terms? The *New York Times* reports the case of a doctor who refuses to treat a man with a broken foot because his friends look effeminate. In Arcadia, Florida, the home of a family with three hemophiliac sons who are HIV antibody-positive is fire-bombed. A Puerto Rican woman in New York goes to 16 different hospitals before a doctor identifies her infection as AIDS-related. And a Los Angeles pediatrician who treats dozens of children with AIDS counsels his patients' parents not to tell anyone—even other family members—

for fear the kids will be completely isolated and ostracized.

In the panic response to AIDS, anti-gayness plays a central role. It is because AIDS in the U.S. first affected gay men that for years nothing was done about it. Now straight people are afraid to even be around gay men. Several cities with large gay populations report an increase of 200% in violent anti-gay attacks in the last year.

What is needed to prevent the further spread of AIDS is education—education about safer sex. U.S. society has to get over its hangups and talk about what has been a taboo topic. This is, literally, what the doctor ordered. So why isn't it happening? Because the bible thumpers among our political and religious "leaders" are terrified of the possibility that such discussion might condone homosexuality—or any sexuality, for that matter. Gay sex is seen as dirty, immoral. AIDS is touted as God's punishment for the wicked, a disease not only of the body, but of the soul. To have AIDS is to be marked, a pariah, an outcast.

Within the U.S., the AIDS epidemic is hitting Third World communities hard. In New York, nearly 5000 Black and Latino people have AIDS, roughly 50% of reported cases. Eighty percent of the city's women with AIDS—and 90% of the children—are people of color. There are recent reports of several Black teenagers coming down with the disease. In the Southwest, reported AIDS cases in the Diné (Navajo) nation jumped from zero to 39 between July and October of 1987. Medical facilities for colonized people barely exist and they are racist to the core, structured to deny rather than to provide needed services. The impact of colonialism and white supremacy on Black and Latino people is so severe that New York City health officials have had to admit that medical conditions in the South Bronx are comparable to those in Kinshasa, Zaire, one of the cities hit hardest by AIDS on the African

continent. This chronic denial of health care in the face of the AIDS epidemic amounts to a new form of genocide.

AIDS is attacking Black and other Third World communities already reeling from the plague of drug addiction. The drug traffic is more than big business. It is a conscious form of population control. Drugs lock Third World youth into a spiral of powerlessness and despair that leads nowhere but to the grave. And now, added to the slow poison of heroin and crack, AIDS is being injected into the veins of Black and Latino youth, condemning both them and their unborn children to an early death.

The spread of AIDS among IV drug users occurs not only through the sharing of needles, but through heterosexual contact as well. Yet we still hear that heterosexuals are not at risk. Why? Because the debate over heterosexual transmission is really about whether AIDS is likely to spread among white heterosexuals. Black people, especially IV drug users, are not viewed as people, but as objects. Objects are considered expendable.

From within Black and Latino communities, organizers are bringing to light the killer impact of AIDS on colonized people. They warn that the price of inaction is the death of thousands more. One thing that we have learned from history is that the U.S. has no respect for the lives of people of color. The AIDS crisis exposes this more clearly than ever. The U.S. government will never implement the necessary programs unless they are forced to. The movement against AIDS has to be part of this fight.

AIDS is a political football, being tossed about by right-wing politicians and ideologues, Christian zealots and an assortment of other bigots. These conservative forces ignore what most medical professionals are saying and offer us mandatory testing and quarantine as the "solution." They want to make AIDS a crime.

Last November, most people thought Lyndon Larouche's quarantine initiative on the California ballot was completely crackpot—which it was. But in the intervening year, nearly every state in the nation has enacted some type of mandatory testing legislation. Many have also considered allowing health officials to maintain master lists of test results, and giving insurance companies the right to refuse insurance for those who test positive. Popular support for such measures is growing. A *Los Angeles Times* poll (July 1987) showed that half of the U.S. population would now tolerate both mandatory testing of people "at high risk" for AIDS—and quarantine. Sixty-eight percent said they would favor criminal penalties for people with AIDS who remain sexually active.

The question of testing is complex. People choose to get tested—or not—for a variety of medical, political and emotional reasons. But one thing is clear. Those who decide to take the test should be able to do so without any type of coercion. Professional counseling should be available both before and after. And testing must be anonymous. We cannot allow the state to compile master lists of those who test positive or to go hunting for our sexual partners. Without resistance, the gay community could be driven underground. AIDS panic must be fought.



ACTUP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) demonstrating on Tax Day, 1987, in New York City to demand increased funding for AIDS research and treatment.

If the right can win public support for mandatory testing, quarantine may not be far behind. While quarantine is being debated on the outside, it is already implemented in the prisons. In most state prison systems, prisoners with AIDS are locked away in AIDS isolation units. Not only those with symptoms, but anyone who tests positive is segregated. Their activities are severely restricted: they are treated as a threat to prison security. Nor is any medical treatment made available. They are simply locked up and left to die.

Quarantine will not spring up full-blown in one day. It will be implemented a step at a time. Quarantining of prisoners is the first step. If we accept this, what is next: the warehousing of thousands in high security AIDS "treatment centers?" Much of the public accepts what happens inside prisons without a second thought. It is as if people behind bars, the majority of whom are Black and Latino, are less than human beings. Such neglect is dangerous. In the fight against AIDS, we have learned so much about the importance of human life. How can we turn our backs on prisoners?

AIDS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR GAY LIBERATION

The AIDS crisis is putting gay men and lesbians through tremendous changes and we can all learn from their response. Through endless discussions, some in small groups with trained facilitators, others in kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms, gay men are struggling to overcome a collective denial, work through our fears, share our grief. We pace up and down hospital corridors, wondering if friends will come home one more time, if they have days or only hours left. We attend countless funerals and memorials. Yet through it all, we are finding new courage, dignity, new value in life and humanity.

We are confronting the alienation we feel as gay men. The male supremacist notion that we could find fulfillment by becoming as butch as possible is being challenged by the overwhelming emotional impact of AIDS. There is a renewed gentleness in the gay community, missing since the early 70s. We are learning not to take each other for granted.

Gay men have made profound changes around sex as well. While the state remained silent, gay men took to the streets to hand out literature and to talk about the dangers of anal and oral sex. Many groups struggled long and hard to promote the use of condoms, distributing them widely, convincing the community that, yes, there is sex after latex.

The gay community's response to AIDS is one of the most effective public health campaigns the U.S. has ever seen, and not only in terms of adopting safer sex practices. As a group, gay men are more knowledgeable about AIDS transmission, symptoms and treatments—both approved and unapproved—than most doctors. Gay men diagnosed

with ARC and AIDS are refusing to accept the western medical view that they can do little or nothing to prevent imminent death. On their own, they are experimentally testing a broader range of drugs and nutritionally-based treatments than the NIH, the FDA or pharmaceutical companies have been willing even to consider.

AIDS is also bringing gay men and lesbians closer together. From the beginning, lesbians have taken up the issue of AIDS as their own, although as a group they have a lower incidence of the disease than any other sector of the population. Together, lesbians and gay men are struggling to deal with the contempt of an increasingly anti-gay society. Lending support to gay brothers, lesbians are making the movement against AIDS a priority. They are constantly at the bedsides of the sick, launch blood drives for people with AIDS, and participate in counseling, health care and education. Lesbians active in the struggle against AIDS are also challenging male supremacy within the gay men's community. The more consciously this struggle takes root, the more strongly these renewed bonds of unity will hold.

A significant aspect of the gay movement's response to AIDS has been direct confrontation with the state, the medical establishment and the pharmaceutical industry. In the San Francisco Bay Area, Citizens for Medical Justice sat in at the offices of Burroughs-Wellcome, the manufacturers of AZT, to protest the drug's prohibitively high cost and the red tape involved in getting it. Last April 15th, ACTUP (AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) snarled traffic at the main New York City post office—where people were flocking to beat the deadline for filing tax returns—demanding increased federal funding for AIDS research and treatment. In Chicago, DAGMAR (Dykes and Gay Men Against Racism and the Right Wing) organized over 300 people to participate in an illegal 24-hour vigil outside the home of Illinois governor Richard Thompson, calling on him to veto repressive AIDS legislation awaiting his signature. Six people chained themselves to his front gate. In October, over 300,000 people are expected to join in a National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, which will be followed two days later by mass civil disobedience at the Supreme Court. AIDS tops the list of issues raised by the march.

The fight against the AIDS epidemic has brought home the need to rebuild a lesbian/gay liberation movement. For those who are waiting for the right moment for the issue to come off the back burner, this is it. We are already seeing how easily "equal rights under the law," which the gay movement spent years working to achieve, can crumble to dust. Lesbian and gay liberation cannot be reduced to a struggle for gay people's right to be just like straight people. The society needs to do some changing. We want a complete overhaul, a thorough reexamination of social and sexual relations. ■

EDITORIALS

REAGAN, CONGRESS,

THE IRAN-CONTRA COMMITTEE

PROFILES IN COWARDICE



The surrender was unconditional. Faced with Oliver North and his engaging defense of genocide, the Iran Contra Committee fell into line. After six days of unpaid and unchallenged advertisements for the contras, North walked off the stand temporarily a New American Hero. All that remained was for Poindexter to take the prearranged fall, leaving Shultz and Weinberger to sweet talk the Congress. All over William Casey's conveniently dead body.

The hearings weren't entirely a shell game. Blatant violations of Constitutional limits, especially Casey's "off-the-shelf" CIA, were noted with indignation. And there was stern condemnation of the "coup" within the White House and the abrogation of all power to the Executive Branch. Yet despite the revelations about the fascistic "secret enterprise" of Casey, North, Secord et al, the anticipated showdown never quite materialized. With their eyes set firmly on the Presidential race of 1988, the divided Democrats tiptoed through the hearings. They were more than eager to embrace George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger, whose testimonies were passionate (if self-serving) defenses of bourgeois legality. It became clear that there are many in the ruling class (even within the Reagan Administration) who still believe that Congress can and should be a partner in covert wars of aggression. Which is what Congress wanted to hear.

Even the lofty lectures about Constitutional process were tempered by Congressional desire to prevent a Watergate-style destruction of the President. As for Central America, the Democrats confined their comments to how policy got made and who got to make it. No one

except for a few hearty protestors had the integrity to utter a word of truth about contra atrocities. The problem as seen from the Hill was that too much was hidden from Congress. "Next time, just come and tell us what you're really doing," was the message.

The sheep-like performance of the Iran/Contra Committee aside, there were real issues at stake. With less than two years left in the Reagan era, the ruling class has grown increasingly apprehensive about the capacity of the Administration to successfully address the problems of empire. What really set off the fireworks was the bungled arms-for-hostages deal with Iran at the same time Reagan was waging a worldwide campaign against arms sales to "terrorist states." This came hot on the heels of the fiasco at Reykjavik, where the Reagan Administration was dealt a stunning propaganda defeat by the Soviet Union. The televised melodrama became a vehicle to overturn the "Iran initiative," restore faith in U.S. foreign policy, reassert control over the CIA and NSC, and place management of the Reagan Doctrine back in the hands of the State and Defense Departments, with due respect paid to Congress.

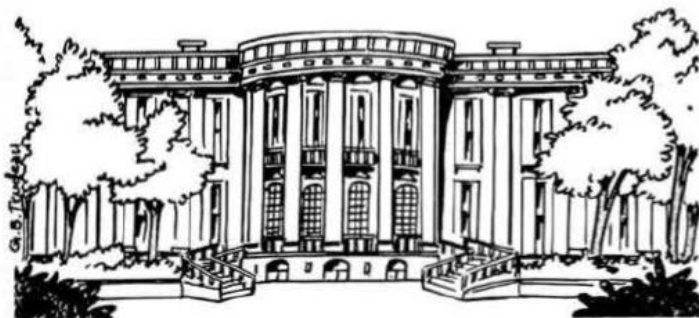
This has now resulted in a changing of the guard around Ronald Reagan. Gone are Casey, Buchanan, McFarlane, North and Poindexter, all key representatives of the New Right. In their place are men like Carlucci and Baker, from the more traditional conservative power elite. Their job is to stabilize the Presidency, maintain some control over the still-powerful New Rightists in and around the Administration, and insure that the blunders cease as the President enters into negotiations with the Soviet Union over arms control.

The thrust of the hearings was to adjust the Reagan Doctrine, not overturn it. With few exceptions, U.S. strategists agree with Reagan's premise that the weakened position of U.S. imperialism demands an effort to roll back (not just contain) advances for revolution around the world. Democrats as well as Republicans know that this means the construction of surrogate armies to do the fighting and dying, since the U.S. public will not readily accept the use of U.S. troops in such endeavors. Yet these U.S. creations have to be projected as indigenous, which calls for a level of secrecy about the extent of U.S. control. So there is bipartisan support (and minimal public debate) in regard to U.S.-sponsored wars against Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Angola. Congress is routinely informed of these operations, routinely gives assent, and routinely

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& CENTRAL AMERICA

SABOTAGING THE PEACE PLAN



Saying in effect "I'm still a contra," Ronald Reagan is now pulling out all the stops to scuttle the agreement reached by five Central American Presidents in Guatemala City. Attacking the accord as "fatally flawed," he has thrown down the gauntlet to Congress with his decision to request \$270 million more for the contra terrorists. But whatever maneuvers and aggression occur, the peace treaty exposes the failure of imperialist strategy in Central America.

The Guatemala agreement is a political/diplomatic victory for the Nicaraguan revolution as well as an assertion of Central American independence. It recognizes the legitimacy of the Nicaraguan government as well as its right to remain in power until new elections in 1990. It would end all U.S. support for the contras and result in the dismantling of contra bases in Honduras, without demanding an end to Soviet and Cuban aid for the Sandinistas. All this explains why Reagan is trying to sabotage the treaty.

The U.S. is no longer able to command obedience in Central America. Weakened by the failure of the CIA/contra war, embarrassed by Contragate and confronting sharper domestic opposition, the Reagan Administration is finding it harder to impose its will. The contras have proven a political disaster, with their open corruption, interminable squabbles, and a human rights record so awful that even a Reagan-appointed monitoring commission had to criticize them. Even more to the point, they are losing the war. On the run since the 1985 Nicaraguan government counter-offensive, the contras now number approximately 6,000 highly trained and well-supplied terrorists, down from a high of 20,000 in 1984. High tech CIA intelligence and

logistical direction gives them the capability of inflicting great damage and terror, particularly upon the civilian population and the economic infrastructure. But the consolidation of the Sandinista revolution leaves them without a significant base among the Nicaraguan people or a foothold in Nicaraguan territory. Alejandro Bendana, secretary general of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Foreign Relations, put it best: "The most fundamental reason why accords can be reached in Guatemala has to do with the struggle of the Nicaraguan people, which has spelled out that the contras are finished."

The Reagan Administration, however, has no intention of facing these facts. Their goal remains the destruction of the Nicaraguan revolution and they will accept no agreement that attempts to "live and let live" with the Sandinistas. We can expect a new round of charges about Sandinista violations of human rights and democratic liberties. This will be the stick used to attack Nicaragua's compliance with the peace agreement, despite the fact that Nicaragua has already lifted censorship of *La Prensa*, declared a limited cease-fire and promised to end the state of siege, reopen the Catholic radio station, free some political prisoners and grant amnesty to many of the contras in return for an end to the contra war. An article in *Foreign Affairs* by Susan Purcell of the Council on Foreign Relations previewed the coming Administration offensive: "The United States must therefore make two things clear: the limits of its tolerance regarding definitions and implementation of democratic reforms, and its refusal to cut off aid to the Nicaraguan resistance until there are credible signs of a democratic opening in Nicaragua."

It goes without saying that the U.S. has no right to dictate the nature of the society which Nicaraguans have fought and died for. But beyond that, the whole concept that "democracy" means "freedom of the press" and "free enterprise" needs to be confronted. The democracy of the Nicaraguan revolution goes far beyond the practice of bourgeois democracy. What do we in the U.S. have to compare to the full participation and mobilization of the workers and campesinos in defining Nicaragua's political, economic and social life? Where is the U.S. equivalent of the nationwide debate taking place in Nicaragua over equality for women? Noting the inappropriateness of the U.S. dictating the terms of democracy, Daniel Ortega has suggested that Nicaraguans might have some comments about U.S.-style democracy. He has a point. Just walk down the streets of Harlem or Watts and check out the benefits which white supremacy and colonialism ■

have brought to Black people here—benefits of “freedom” in the United States.

Where are the Democrats in all this? While many of them have a soft spot in their hearts for the contras, most are convinced they’re a lost cause and a prelude to a more



direct and costly U.S. intervention. Such an escalation would further the U.S.’ isolation in Latin America and produce the highest level of polarization domestically since the Vietnam era. So some Democrats are searching for a better way to handle Nicaragua. Writing in the *New York Times* a few weeks before the Guatemala pact, Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind) put forward their alternative: “The Sandinista threat can be contained by a negotiated settlement enforced by United States power, including diplomatic and economic pressure. This is a more sustainable approach than a strategy that relies on the contras....To move the repressive Sandinistas towards a less virulent, more open society will require peace and patience.” According to this logic, the Guatemala treaty could be an acceptable first step—especially if the U.S. exerts pressure to foist its own version of “democracy” upon Nicaragua.

Does this mean the Democrats will now mount a full-tilt campaign to ditch the contras and settle with Nicaragua? Don’t hold your breath. Some powerful Party leaders like Sam Nunn of Georgia continue to endorse a “two track” approach, using contra military pressure as a continuing wedge to ruin the Nicaraguan economy and force an unfav-

orable negotiated agreement on Nicaragua. In addition, the anti-communism which underlies the liberal Democrats’ alternative leaves them vulnerable to the strident Reagan campaign against the Sandinistas. The Party leadership, after all, doesn’t want to be blamed for the “loss of Nicaragua” in the upcoming 1988 elections. So despite the opening which the Guatemala Accord provides, there will be strong pulls within the Democratic Party to postpone a clean break with the contra war. We can expect more compromises like the \$3.5 million in “humanitarian” contra aid which sailed through Congress on a voice vote. Never underestimate the cowardice of the Democrats.

What about El Salvador? The *New York Times* and other establishment organs hailed the Guatemala Accord as a great victory for Duarte, in that it calls for “insurgent groups” (in this case the FMLN) to lay down their arms as a condition for negotiations. The FMLN, along with the contras, are pictured as the big losers in the peace process. But this is the same wishful thinking that has predicted the demise of the FMLN for years. The reality is far different.

Duarte signed the treaty out of weakness, not strength. He was willing to anger his U.S. patrons in order to gain some short-term legitimacy as a “seeker of peace.” But this played a lot better in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* than it did in El Salvador. Faced with the worst economic crisis in the country’s history, Duarte stands isolated, his counterinsurgency plan, “United to Reconstruct,” in shambles. Having fought back from the genocide of the early 80s, the popular movement has within the last two years grown to unprecedented proportions. Literally each week, the largest coalition of workers, peasants and student groups—the UNTS (National Unity of Salvadoran Workers) grows in breadth and confrontativeness. At the same time, the forces of the FMLN have spread throughout the country, rooted themselves among the people, and developed a degree of sophistication that has left the government unable to stop them. The oligarchy and government have revived the death squads and drastically expanded the repression. To no avail. The momentum has switched to the popular movement.

How will the U.S. and Duarte respond? Tactically, they need to project a facade of openness to dialogue. But they

PROFILES, from p. 4

looks the other way. Only around Iran and Nicaragua (where the contras have proven such a political and military disaster) has serious debate surfaced.

If the hearings are any indication, Congress can be trusted with all the new information about covert activities which will now come their way. The Iran/Contra Committee suppressed discussion of North’s contingency plan for martial law, ignored or ridiculed evidence of CIA/

contra drug running, refused to follow-up on disclosures of CIA military operations in El Salvador, and moved into executive session when any new covert activity threatened to be revealed. Managing the difficult feat of uncovering and covering up at the same time, they let the Administration off the hook. Reagan and the “secret team” may have been damaged by the battle, but it would be foolish to think they lost the war. ■

on, are in no position to dictate the terms of a negotiated peace, given the strength of the opposition. So the peace moves will be cosmetic. The strategic answer will be escalation of the war.

As far back as 1981, the Reagan Administration "drew the line" against "Marxist insurgency" at El Salvador. Since then, there has been bipartisan support for the war against the Salvadoran people. Funded to the tune of \$2 million a day by the U.S. Congress, the low intensity war in El Salvador is a key imperialist project, touted as a model of successful counterinsurgency. Some of the most vociferous Duarte supporters are liberal anti-contra Democrats like Alan Cranston and Christopher Dodd. With debate and division centered on Nicaragua, the Reagan Administration will seek consensus for an all-out effort to smash the Salvadoran popular movement and stabilize the Duarte government. At the heart of this effort is the already-begun propaganda war painting the FMLN/FDR as the obstacle to peace in the region.

All this raises important issues for the movement here. While welcoming the Guatemala treaty, we need to focus as well on the realities of El Salvador, realities which are not recognized in the agreement. It is ridiculous, for example, to call on the FMLN to disarm and reenter a non-existent "democratic process" as a precondition for dialogue with the Duarte government. Especially when the Salvadoran people are demanding dialogue without conditions. There is also no parallel between the FMLN (an indigenous liberation movement with a deep popular base) and the contras (a CIA creation from start to finish). Disinformation about the "unwillingness" of the FMLN to seek peace needs to be countered by a broad campaign publicizing the FMLN/FDR's own peace proposals and recognizing the FMLN/FDR as legitimate representatives of the Salvadoran people. Official silence about the growing repression in the streets of San Salvador needs to be

met by active solidarity with the UNTS and the rest of the mass movement. This isn't just the job of a few solidarity organizations. Given that the justification for further U.S. intervention will be a red-baiting, "anti-terrorist" campaign against both the FMLN and the UNTS, it is up to the anti-intervention and peace movement as a whole to tell the truth about the Salvadoran revolution.

* * * * *

With all the twists and turns of the "peace process," one thing is clear. The credibility of the Reagan Administration is at an all-time low, and the time is ripe to escalate our work here at home. While some may believe that peace is just around the corner or that Congress will magically reverse itself and end U.S. intervention, in reality it will take a dynamic and vigilant movement to beat back the pressures towards escalation. This makes it all the more urgent to demand an end to all contra aid, whether openly military or disguised as "humanitarian." And this needs to be accompanied every step of the way by the fight to end U.S. intervention in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The war in Central America is a regional conflict, and a just peace will only come with the end of U.S. aggression throughout the region.

In a communique issued on August 11, 1987, the FMLN General Command stated: "Everyone who supports the Guatemala accord has the responsibility to demand that the U.S. government immediately stop its intervention and aggression in Central America. This is the minimum reality and moral and political outcome required for peace today in our region. To demand peace and stop U.S. intervention and aggression is not the same as demanding that people surrender, be humiliated and give in to the empire." If we take this to heart, our own resistance can sharpen in the complex period ahead. ■

DEATH SQUADS IN LOS ANGELES

Salvadoran death squads are now operating in the U.S. On July 7, Yanira Coreas, a young Salvadoran activist, was leaving a CISPES meeting when she was kidnapped at knifepoint by two men, brutally tortured and repeatedly raped with a stick. All the while, the men demanded information about Salvadoran compañeros and CISPES members. She refused to answer the questions. Finally, after six hours, they dumped her on the street. But the nightmare was not over. She then had to endure four more hours of interrogation by the LAPD before getting medical treatment or being allowed to see her family.

Those who have met Yanira or have heard her speak are struck by her courage



Yanira Coreas

and determination. When asked how she endured the ordeal, she answered "I am not just an individual. I know that what I went through is the same as for thousands of Salvadorans."

The attack on Yanira Coreas shows that the Salvadoran government and its death squads have brought their terror into the U.S. This coincides with escalating U.S. government repression on both the Salvadoran and anti-intervention movements. This outrage was meant to scare people to stop us all from doing our work. Our response can echo Yanira's—to build a more powerful solidarity movement which can stop all U.S. intervention.

SEX, PORN & FEMINISM

KITTYKAT

COLIN PRESENTS
BIZARRE
WORLD
OF S & M



JAILHOUSE
GIRLS



MARDI GRAS

THE IMAGES ARE EVERYWHERE.

The woman licking her lips and staring out into space. She's advertising—*anything*. The woman licking her lips and staring out into space as she masturbates. She's selling *sex*. The images of the perfect body—tall, taut, thin, tanned. The images of women being raped—and liking it. Of children being molested and liking it. Of women mutilating themselves—and liking it. The images of men "making love" to women violently—and loving it.

They have been with us forever, shaping our consciousness, determining our desires, manipulating what moves us, forming our sexual mores and influencing our sexuality itself. The images are unreal, yet all too real. And they're getting worse. It's the pornography of America! Read the *New York Times Magazine* and see more and more pictures of naked and near naked women. Pick up a fashion magazine and see pictures of naked men and women having intercourse while they advertise sneakers. Look at your local billboard and see a row of women's rear ends advertising suntan lotion. Go to your local newsstand and see ten, twenty, thirty magazines with pictures of huge women's breasts staring at you (so to speak). We look at all the images and feel everything and nothing. Mostly we just don't see it. We're used to it. If the pictures disgust us, we turn away, distance ourselves, pretend that it has nothing to do with us.

It wasn't always like this. In the sixties and seventies the women's movement began to attack these images, branding them for what they were: degrading and humiliating to women. We found that women's oppression and male supremacy were endemic to many of the institutions around us. Thus women targeted *all* these institutions, from Madison Avenue to TV, from the women's magazines to the beauty pageants to the pornography industry itself. Women demonstrated at the offices of *Playboy* and went into porn shops ripping up the merchandise. We drew the connections between violence against women and our portrayal in the media and pornography. We redefined rape, hitherto called an act of sex, as an act of violence and aggression. "Take Back The Night" marches were put on and women learned self-defense. We were learning how to be more powerful.

Women's sexuality began to be talked about on its own terms—for our own pleasure and enjoyment. Articles like "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," debunked the idea that the only way that women could have orgasms was through vaginal stimulation and intercourse. The "discovery" of the clitoris, something talked about in sex manuals in China and India in the 4th century, showed us why most women were neither frigid nor incapable of sexual satisfaction. This kind of article was just the beginning.

No longer would we allow our sexual fulfillment to be considered less important than men's. The old double stan-

dard heretofore imposed on us about men and women was quickly becoming an item on the cutting room floor, along with the traditional sexual passivity that had so dominated our relations with men. We wanted change and wanted to change ourselves. We explored our fantasies, developed new ideas about sex and educated men we were with. We learned by ourselves and with each other and when some of us came out, we discovered that we could have sexual excitement and fulfillment without men being there at all!

As women's needs and desires were acknowledged, sexuality became more and more public. Even the right wing Christian movement told men that they had sexual obligations to women. It seemed like sex was there for the taking. What used to be forbidden was now plentiful. Fantasies were made public. Techniques were discussed on the radio.

But this same liberalization caused disruptions in the social relations of the society at large. Many men couldn't

How strange that porn with its degrading images of women and children should arouse such fierce debate within the women's movement.

adjust to the so-called new order. Men had always considered women to be their private property, seeing sex as a form of conquest and power. Men could do as they liked, but women were to stay pure, virginal, faithful. Except, of course, for those who were needed for men's "natural needs." Then women became the slut, the loose woman, the tarts, the whores. Think about it — there are no equivalent words for men. To be identified with male sex organs was to be powerful, to be identified with women was weak, deceitful, unclean.

A lot of men became very angry. Violence against women, always present, rose dramatically. The crimes of incest, wife battering and child abuse increased—one out of three women would be sexually abused before her 21st birthday. Children and women were to be made afraid of going out on the streets by themselves. Sexual violence and violence in the name of sexuality was also displayed more and more publicly. Ranging from fashion spreads to record album covers, women were seen bound and gagged. Pornography, which could be bought at the corner store, began to routinely show violence against women as pleasurable. Rape, always considered a great turn on, was now even more so. Within this atmosphere, the pornography industry grew by leaps and bounds.

It's within this context that the controversy over pornography has developed. How strange that pornography with its implicitly and explicitly degrading images of women and children should arouse such fierce debate within the women's movement.

On one side are those who see porn as both a humiliating medium, symptomatic of women's oppression, and a contributor to the growing violence against women. Unfortunately, some spokespeople in the anti-porn movement often talk about porn in a way which denies women's real desires and needs for a freer sexuality, both for lesbian and straight women. As such, they don't answer many women's needs for a new way of thinking about sex.

The anti-porn movement, therefore, has developed a reputation it doesn't really deserve for narrowness, extrem-

Porn is big business:

- * \$8 billion worldwide sales
- * 200 million copies of *Playboy*, *Penthouse* & *Hustler* sold in the U.S.
- * 180 million dial-a-porn phone calls

(statistics for 1985)

ism and for being anti-sex. Women seeking a freer sexual expression are turned off and alarmed by pronouncements in support of censorship that, like it or not, sound like right-wing fundamentalist propaganda. Then too, statements put forward by some anti-porn activists, that intercourse is a form of rape and biologically exploitative, make many women feel that the anti-porn movement has gone off the deep end.

On the other side, we find other attitudes that also seem incomprehensible. For instance, it's gotten to the point that many women are defending pornography, championing magazines like *Playboy* because they supposedly can provide many women with their first exposure to sex and sexuality. Still others maintain that given the lack of good choices the straightest of porn isn't that bad. They cite their own feelings and experiences and maintain that porn's effect has been exaggerated and overblown.

The thought of feminists defending Bob Guccione of *Penthouse* is ridiculous. Why? Because these magazines are clearly only for men—they don't foster an attitude toward women that is neutral. Rather the images of women that do appear in these pages are traditional and stereotypic at best and offensive and blatantly women-hating at worst.

Yet to be honest, even the women who defend these magazines aren't exactly enamored by the way they portray women; but they defend them because they fear a time when sexually explicit literature will once again be placed

underground. Women are haunted by scenes conjured up in books like Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, which describes a time in the future when the U.S. is controlled by the right wing and women's only purpose is to breed. People are particularly afraid that many books, magazines and videos which celebrate and explore gay and lesbian sexuality will be banned. This isn't just an idle fear; AIDS hysteria and homophobia are already producing a chilling effect on sexuality and especially on gay sexuality.

Herein lie the contradictions and problems in discussing this question. Let's face it, sex is personal and people's responses to all the discussions about it are very subjective. No matter what our opinions, we all feel very judged and pressured about what we feel and what we do. It's a very touchy subject, to say the least.

It's difficult to come up with a really good definition of pornography, partially because so many of us have gotten used to very sexually explicit material. We're also very accustomed to seeing objectionable and objectifying images of women. At a time when we want to explore sexuality, many people have questions as to what's porn and what's erotica. There's not very much difference between the obligatory sex scene in a spy novel and a "porn" story.

We don't think that as feminists we can become thought police with definitions of politically incorrect and politically correct sex. But we feel that the growth of pornography is symptomatic of the continuing exploitation of women. It's not the root cause of women's oppression, but it is a contributing factor. We can begin to create an atmosphere that really looks at what is harmful to women and children and that defines violence against us, for whatever reason, as unacceptable. It's time to analyze quite clearly the role of pornography and how it makes us act and feel.

* * * * *

Let's talk about some of the magazines—the so-called "mainstream ones"—that are defined and accepted as pornography. Magazines like *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Hustler*—all readily available and sold world-wide. The images of women—what's "sexy and desirable"—haven't changed much over the years. For the most part they're big breasted, tall, blond and curiously vacant looking. In these magazines, women's bodies are often cut up into parts—and except for those "big red pouting lips"—the only important parts are from the neck down. Women are not thinking human beings—we're objects. We're our genitals—often showed pried open. We're our buttocks, also offered up for penetration. We're our big extended nipples. We're holes, we're cunts, we're dripping with sex. We're there for him.

In the cartoons, the humiliation goes even further. "Joke" after "joke" shows women as repulsive things, objects of scorn and disgust. We're often portrayed as car-

ictures that men need but can't stand. One common theme is that of women's genitals being so smelly that men have to have sex in places like garbage dumps so that the vaginal smell won't be overwhelming. Other "laughs" come from women being shown as insatiable beasts—that ultimately only animals, dogs and horses can satisfy. Racist pictures of black women who will hurt men come up in every issue. Cartoons like these are in *all* the above-named magazines.

So too are pictures of child abuse—another subject of great "yuks." The centerfold for the June '87 *Hustler* says, "She looks like a schoolgirl, but she's really legal." All the magazines have letters which recount men's sexual exploits with their "daughter's best friends." Despite the heightened public awareness, incest is still considered to be a huge sexual turn-on.

One could go on and on with these descriptions, but one thing is clear. These can't be the images of sexuality that women are interested in defending. These images are not there for women. They're there to oppress and suppress women and keep us sexually inferior to men. In the name of exploration, we can't be in the position of defending the very materials that are intent on keeping us in the very same places (literally and figuratively).

* * * * *

For those of us who are lesbians the situation is even more complicated. We find ourselves caught in a double

bind. On the one hand, the society defines lesbians purely on the basis of sex. Women sleeping with women. On the other hand, lesbian sex is considered to be almost invisible. What are our models? Until quite recently we didn't even talk about it. We assumed that sex between two women would just magically eliminate all the problems and hangups. But we were wrong. Sex between women has its own problems.

So-called lesbian sex is portrayed all the time in pornography, but it's voyeurism for men based on male fantasy and male models. The women don't look at all like us. They're made up totally for men, having sex with each other to turn on men and the story line more often than not says they couldn't possibly satisfy each other without men. These images both distort lesbian relationships and are completely humiliating. The result is that it cultivates in men's minds the classic view that lesbians just need a good fuck, and that therefore any man has the right and some feel, the obligation, to "cure" us and dyke bait, rape and intimidate us as they please.

* * * * *

One of the big arguments for defending porn is that the images portrayed are not real. They're not meant for real life—they're just supposed to fuel the imagination—they're fantasy. If you see a picture of a woman being beaten or even of women just sitting there exposing themselves—it's not to be taken seriously—it's just for arousal



Is it porn ... or is it the New York Times?

and fun. The pictures, claim these defenders, have no real impact on the consciousness of the people who are looking at them.

To say that there is no effect seems almost ridiculous. If they have no impact, why look at them at all? Propaganda, after all, no matter what form it takes, be it the written or spoken word or visual images, affects us. It forms a core of our culture—of what we believe and feel.

What do men feel when they look at these magazines? When they continue to see us as objects—laid out for them? They're being given not just "explicit" materials, but *explicit permission* to continue to think of women in the way they're shown. After a while, it all becomes very acceptable. And when women protest, we're the ones who are off the wall.

Studies and testimony have shown the connection between pornography and sexual abuse. Feminists, like Diana Russell, have documented cases where rapes have taken place copied from the porn that men have read the night before. The portrayal of sexuality in the majority of porn is supposed to *feed fantasy* and then make it *real*!

We know only too well the relationship between war and conquest and violence against women. We also know the role that pornography plays in proselytizing the acceptability of this sexual violence within the minds of the men that carry it out. Whether in Vietnam, Central America, Africa or the Philippines, the images carried in porn magazines reinforce the racist and sexist ideology of the Armed Forces.

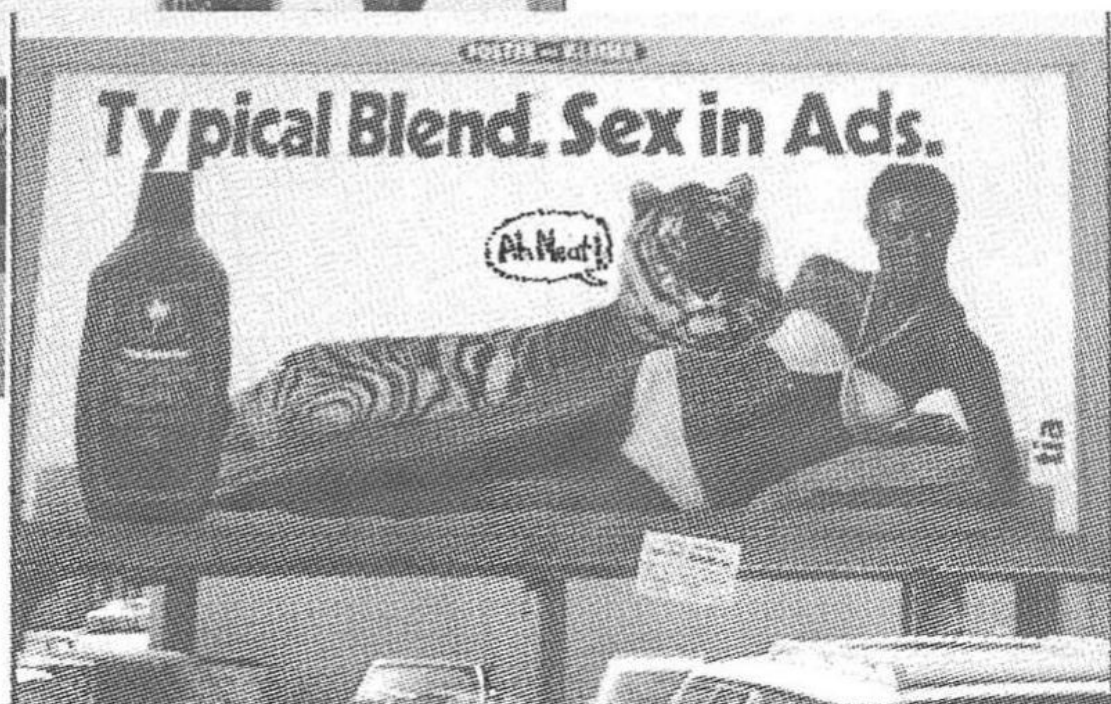
Images of women are used to separate men from what they are really doing. "Squeeze the trigger like you would

your woman's tit," was a common expression in target practice during the Vietnam war. GIs then routinely fired at pictures of women's vaginas and vied with each other to hit the bull's eye. The portrayal of Asian women as passive sexual beings just "dying to serve men" or of African women as sexually crazed beasts "just dying to be dominated," run rampant in the magazines and videos found in every soldier's barracks.

An example of this humiliation and cultural disruption is the Philippines, where tens of thousands of Filipinas work at literally slave wages as hospitality girls outside the bases at Clark and Subic Bay. Sailors kept on ship for months at a time are rewarded with sex shows and sex girls. The women have no choice—there are very few economic alternatives open to them. The fantasies in the magazines are performed for real in the back rooms of the bars and the back streets of Olongapo. When the sailors are finished, the "girls" go on to the next customer. This scene is repeated time and time again wherever GIs are stationed.

Porn combines with the other mass media—TV and advertising—to give us our total images of women. Even the so-called women's magazines devote countless pages to what we're supposed to look like, how we're supposed to act, and, of course, how we can get and give good sex. And it's taken for granted that "good" sex is "straight" sex, so articles abound telling us how to satisfy men and how we can get them to satisfy us. Sex is a commodity to be purchased like everything else. It's all part of America's belief in the quick fix and the perfection of technology. Just have the perfect body, the perfect clothes and the perfect *technique* and you'll be good in bed. And





if you're good in bed, you'll be *happy* in *life*. (The new "women-oriented" porno films pride themselves on taking place in expensive settings—sort of like *Dynasty* triple X-rated so that we can relate to them more.) So why doesn't life always work out this way for the majority of us mortals?

We see these pictures of women everyday and everywhere. How we live up to the women we see on TV totally influences what other people think of us and how we're treated. They form the basis of our own self-conception, and, although most of us know logically that we can never live up to these so-called perfect bodies, we make ourselves miserable in the attempt to do so. When numbers of women started coming out in the 60s, one of the liberating aspects was understanding that women didn't need to aspire to these male standards of beauty. All of these images serve one basic purpose: to control us; to promote a system of social relations which will not allow women to get too far out of our defined places.

We're so conditioned to the concepts of power and control being linked to desire and sexuality that by this point many of us are attracted to and fantasize about things we probably don't even like about ourselves. Just take the idea that women want to be dominated in sex, an idea that has permeated hundreds (if not thousands) of years of sexual practice. None of us, no matter how liberated we think

we are or aren't, can completely separate ourselves off from these and the hundreds of other influences that have shaped our collective character.

Yes, we're turned on by a lot of things, but this doesn't mean that we can't change what we're turned on by, or that we should defend power and pain as liberating. This seems so predetermined and narrow, like when our mothers used to talk about their lives and say: "But I like cooking, cleaning and waiting on your father." Many women recognized that they didn't have to like that kind of relationship, so they changed and demanded more for themselves.

Precisely because sex is so important to us, we have to search for a different way to talk about it. The old definitions and standards—those epitomized in pornography—lead us nowhere fast. Why when we're trying to unravel our messed up sex lives and relationships don't we pay as much attention to the rest of our lives as well? Why don't we talk about the need for women's equality in order to have good sex, the need for quality childcare and health care for good sex, or for full acceptance as lesbians for good sex. Surely these concerns are just as important as is the "great position" for good sex. But then that would be dealing with sexuality as an expression of the whole person—a point which the current debate on pornography too often misses.

FATHOMING



Fast on the heels of the Iran/Contragate scandal comes the spiralling warfare in the oil-rich Persian Gulf. Proof that Congressional coverups and damage control can't paper over the problems of the real world. In the dizzying space of less than a year, the U.S.' proclaimed policy of neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war stands exposed as a lie. After secretly dealing with Iran, the U.S. has abruptly switched sides and is now throwing its weight behind Iraq. In August, when Iran and the Soviet Union began the development of an oil pipeline and rail links, the U.S. goal of locking the Soviet Union out of the Gulf began turning into its opposite. If the Congressional hearings were Reagan's bad dream, the U.S. administration awoke from them into a nightmare.

How are we to make sense out of all this? The Iran-Contragate hearings, which were supposed to clarify the Iran "initiative," offered a limited and contradictory picture at best. Israel's role, so central to this affair, was shredded.¹ And nothing of substance was revealed about the reasons the U.S. is losing control over the Middle East.

Regaining control: this is what the perilous escalation in the Gulf is really about. After seven years of covert opera-

tions, the U.S. has failed to regain the regional supremacy and strategic military bases it lost when the Shah fell from power in 1979.

AFTER THE FALL: FROM CARTER TO REAGAN

Since 1953 Iran, the most populous nation in the area, had been a central element in a regional alliance set up by the U.S. to control the Middle East. In that year the CIA overthrew a popular nationalist government and put the Shah on the throne. During his quarter century reign, Iran's immense oil profits were used to buy U.S. weapons on an undreamed of scale. A tiny ruling class flaunted its wealth while the majority suffered under a police state. The Shah sent troops to suppress a popular resistance in Oman when it appeared likely that the movement would topple the Sultan in the mid 1970s. A Persian (Farsi) speaking, non-Arab country, Iran built an alliance with Israel when many Arab regimes would not. Iran supplied 50% of Israeli oil needs in return for weapons, advisers, strategic and commercial cooperation. By the late 1970s, the Shah's regime was buying \$500 million worth of Israeli armaments every year. From this perspective, it's not hard to see why the loss of Iran came as a catastrophic blow to the architecture of U.S.-Israeli domination over

¹See *Israeli Foreign Affairs*, monthly newsletter, P.O. Box 19580, Sacramento, CA 95819, for excellent ongoing coverage.

THE GULF WAR



the Middle East.

By all accounts, the overthrow of the Shah by a mass Islamic fundamentalist revolt was an unexpected event. Coinciding with the Nicaraguan revolution, the 400-day hostage drama in Teheran dealt a humiliating blow to U.S. prestige and the Carter presidency. The Carter Doctrine, formulated in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, was a ruling class attempt to bolster the eroding U.S. position in the Third World by emphasizing economic leverage, diplomacy and human rights rhetoric in place of direct military assault. By the end of Carter's term in office, powerful elites within the U.S. came to reject this approach as incapable of stemming regional losses to U.S. power. Carter's own National Security Council discussed options to meet the first hostage crisis with retaliation against Iranian oil fields, harbors, refineries and a naval blockade.²

The Reagan victory of 1980 signalled a right turn in American politics based on the elite consensus that the time was right to launch Resurgent America. Placing the U.S. back on the offensive required a rejuvenated ability to wage war on all levels, including the clandestine. To accomplish this, the CIA (whose covert agents had been

greatly reduced by both the Nixon, Ford and Carter administrations after revelations about assassination plots and Mafia links) was restored to a preeminent position. William Casey, multi-millionaire businessman, lifelong spy and top Reagan adviser, was central to the reorganization of power. Caspar Weinberger and George Shultz completely backed this effort. Under this command, the doctrine of Low Intensity Conflict became the "new" method of stopping revolution abroad without incurring strong opposition at home. To sell this plan to the public, the international war against terrorism (based on the Israeli propaganda model used against the Palestinians) was projected everywhere—by right-wing think tanks and Rambo movies.³ To get around using U.S. troops in combat, mercenary/contra armies were created by the CIA, Israel and South Africa to terrorize populations and topple governments.

Inside the U.S., where laws limited CIA secret operations, an entire covert enterprise (the invisible government) was resurrected. Made up of former and current CIA and Pentagon officials, right-wing businessmen, mercenaries, and anti-communist fronts like the Moonies and

²Zbigniew Brezezinski, *Power and Principle*.

³Marshall, Scott and Hunter, *The Iran-Contra Connection*, South End Press, 1987, p. 210.

World Anti-Communist League, this provided the muscle to make sure that the wars went forward.

THE ISRAELI CONNECTION

From the beginning, Israel played a central role in the globalization of counter-revolution:

Central America: A long-time supporter of Nicaragua's Somoza dynasty, Israel had sold Somoza 98% of the weapons used against the Nicaraguan people during the last year of his regime after popular pressure forced the Carter administration to suspend arms shipments. Since then, Israel has been a key arms supplier to the contras. From 1980 to 1983, the U.S. unsuccessfully urged Israel (and then South Africa) to take over direction of the contra operation. In Guatemala, Israel has been a key source of arms and counter-insurgency for over ten years.⁴

Africa: Israel's alliance with racist South Africa is well known. Reports of Israeli shipments of arms to South African-backed UNITA contras fighting to overthrow the Angolan government are surfacing with increasing regularity. Israel and South Africa collaborate in nuclear weapons development and may have jointly tested a bomb over Antarctica.

But it is in the Middle East that Israel plays its paramount role. Set up as an outpost of Europe, the Zionist settler state is a military watchdog and strike force for imperialist interests. Nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than in the "Iran initiative."

Robert (Bud) McFarlane: But I want you to know that from the very beginning of this [the transfer of arms to Iran], Ed, the President was four-square behind it, that he never had any reservations about anything that the Israeli's wanted to do here.

Ed Meese: Bud, I know that, and I can understand why.—Testimony of McFarlane, National Security Adviser, to Tower Commission, 2/87, pps. 53-57.

The idea for the massive transfer of arms to Iran came from Israel in 1980 and rapidly drew support within the White House and CIA. Both countries saw the arms sales as a way to gain influence in Iran. At the same time, each had independent agendas.

What were Israel's motives in pursuing this policy? In part they were economic. The Zionist economy runs on two legs: arms sales and U.S. aid. Production and sales of weapons, estimated at \$2 billion a year, are Israel's largest export. At the same time, Israel is the world's largest recipient of U.S. aid, which together with private Zionist contributions totals \$4 billion a year. The prospect that the Islamic fundamentalist regime would stop buying Israeli

arms (25% of all its foreign sales) and cut off cheap oil was something that Israel had no intention of letting happen.

Secondly, by backing Iran in its war with Iraq, Israel saw the means to strike at a long-time enemy of the Zionist state. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, the Khomeini regime was more than willing to shelve its anti-Zionist rhetoric in favor of getting Israeli arms and intelligence flowing again. Israel further signalled its support for Iran by bombing the Iraqi nuclear complex outside of Baghdad. Israel believes that the numerically stronger Iran would either defeat Iraq or that both sides would be so devastated by a long war that neither could pose a threat to Zionism.

Finally, on a more global level, Israel worked to renew the three-way relationship between itself, Iran and the U.S. in order to enhance its own role and to exclude Arab regimes from becoming strategic partners in imperialist plans in the Middle East. The U.S. knows that, in a region in which hundreds of millions of Arab people live, exclusive reliance on "Spartan" Israel is insufficient. Therefore it has established long-standing relationships with the feudal and dependent capitalist oil producing regimes of the Gulf. (It's no accident that when the CIA needed money for its terrorist operations against Nicaragua, Angola and Afghanistan, it turned to the Saudi Royal family and got between \$32 and \$250 million dollars.) But closer strategic relations with Arab countries is a source of tension with Israel. As pro-U.S. as these governments are, they are Arabs and must oppose Israeli expansionism because their citizens demand it. The efforts of the Zionist lobby in the U.S. in opposing arms sales to Saudi Arabia is an indication of how important this issue is for Israel.

THE U.S. OPENS THE PIPELINE

The U.S. rulers shared Israeli objectives of ultimately winning Iran back into a strategic partnership. The goals of containing Islamic fundamentalism and harnessing it to the anti-Soviet crusade were uppermost in the minds of key officials. They pointed to Iran's support for the mujahedeen fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan and to Khomeini's savage repression of the revolutionary left in Iran. Pressure from multi-national oil companies to recapture their Iranian "prize" undoubtedly contributed to the drive for action. The U.S. thought that the pro-capitalist nature of the regime and its dependence on oil would guide its foreign policy more than anti-American rhetoric. Beyond this, the U.S. retained human assets in thousands of technocrats and military officers from the period of the Shah who remained in the new government. As integrated into the imperialist system as Iran was, the U.S. calculated it would take more than a change of leadership to break these ties.

While the Congressional testimony of Shultz and Weinberger indicated some ruling class doubts over the

⁴Marshall, Scott and Hunter, Chapter V.

possibility of the initiative's success, the record shows that arms sales may have been planned even before Reagan took office. One sign of this is the story that William Casey, Reagan's campaign director in 1980, cut a deal with Khomeini while Carter was still in office. According to reports, Casey agreed to provide arms if Teheran would hold onto the U.S. embassy hostages until after election day. Such a move would doom Carter's chances at the polls and make it appear that Reagan's clout caused their release.⁵ On January 21, 1981, the day after Reagan's inauguration, Iran released the captives who returned to Washington in a flush of patriotic celebration. Following this, then-Secretary of State Haig allowed secret Israeli shipments of U.S. arms to Iran after meetings between his deputy Robert McFarlane and David Kimche, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Six months later this scheme was revealed when an Argentine cargo plane carrying American military supplies from Tel Aviv to Teheran was shot down over the Soviet Union.⁶ Whatever differences existed in the U.S. administration over the

⁵Barbara Honegger and Jim Naureckas, "Did Reagan Steal the 1980 Election?," *In These Times*, June 24, 1987.

⁶*Washington Post*, July 27, 1981, as quoted in *The Chronology*, National Security Archive.

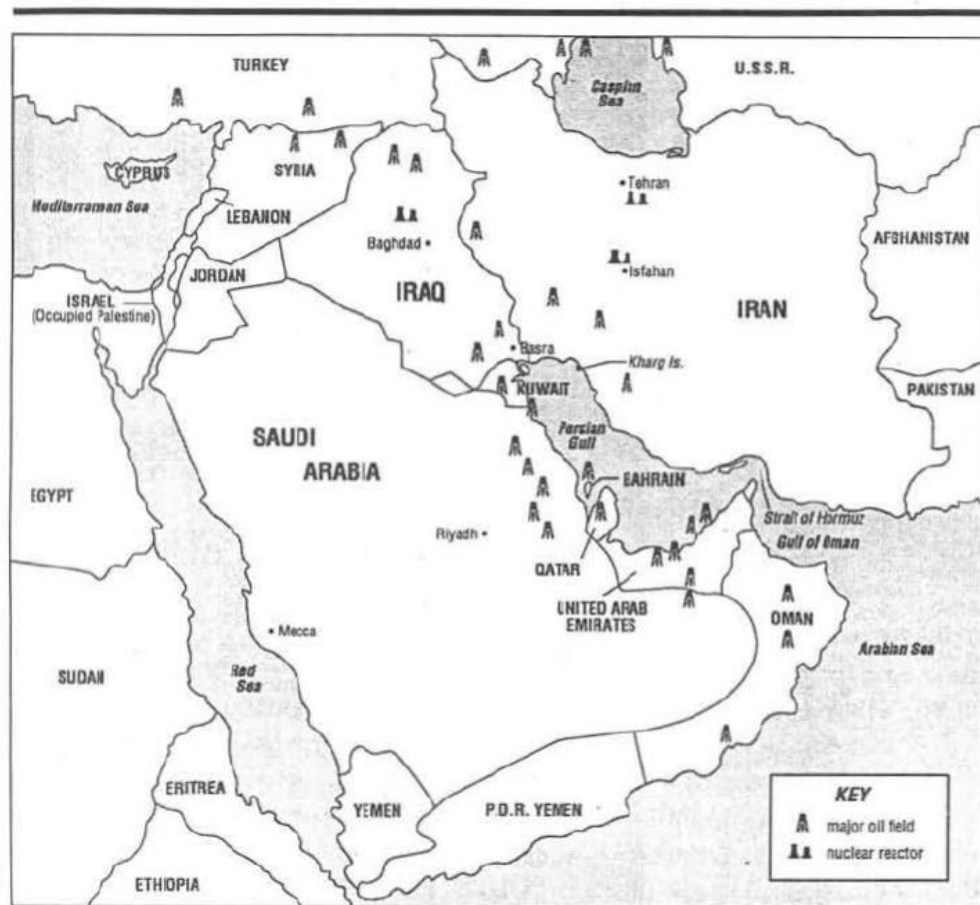
political fallout from this policy were resolved by using Israel as the middleman.

In 1983, arms shipments to Iran multiplied. And the State Department's "Operation Staunch," aimed at stopping the flow of weapons to both Iran and Iraq by Western governments, was reduced to a cover story disguising the booming business in black market arms sanctioned by all the world's powers (see box).

FROM LEBANON TO IRANGATE

The "Iran initiative" arose against a backdrop of U.S.-Israeli aggression in the Middle East and was clearly designed to advance an overall regional strategy. Yet most analyses of Iran-Contra fail to mention the war against the Palestinian people and the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. For both Israel and the U.S., defeating the Palestinian revolution is key to pacifying the Middle East. After two regional wars in 1967 and 1973, the Carter Doctrine brought the Camp David Peace Agreement, which represented a certain shift in U.S. strategy. Camp David's goals were to bring Egypt back into the imperialist orbit and impose a bantustan-type settlement on the Palestinian people, denying their right to nationhood and independence.

Oil on Troubled Waters



Oil: the black gold that fuels the engines of production, feeds markets and sustains the Western way of life. Since the 1940's the Persian/Arabian Gulf has been the center of world oil production, with 55% of the earth's proven reserves (Saudi Arabia alone controls 25%) and 33% of total production capacity. The region supplies roughly 30% of European and 60% of Japanese oil needs. For decades, U.S.-based multinational oil companies like Texaco, Exxon and Standard Oil have reaped hundreds of billions in profit and exerted decisive influence over the Gulf. Control of oil (energy) gave the U.S. leverage over the entire capitalist world. And although the U.S. gets only 5% of its oil from the Gulf, its economy is so interwoven in a Trilateral framework with Europe and Japan that a major disruption in the flow of oil or its dramatic increase in price would be devastating for all.

In June 1978, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini assumed the ideological and political leadership of the Iranian Revolution under the banner of Shi'ite fundamentalism. The core of support for Khomeini came from the urban petit bourgeoisie, including a large class of bazaar merchants, whose prospects had been crushed under the weight of the Shah's dependent capitalist regime. The new Islamic Republic of Iran has as its guiding principle *vila-yat-i faqih*, "the rule of the leading cleric." In practice, this theocracy has shown a harshly anti-democratic and repressive face. Khomeini has rolled back history, forcing women out of public life and behind the veil, instituting widespread violations of human rights, and decimating the left.

Shi'ite fundamentalism advocates an "Islamic world order"; true Islamic countries must break all ties between themselves and the superpowers or their agents. Fundamentally different from the Third World principle of non-alignment, Iran projects the slogan *nah sharq, nah gharb*, "neither East, nor West." Shi'ite Iran is militantly anti-communist as well as anti-Western and is actively trying to "export" its revolution. Precisely how is still being debated within Iran—whether through moral example alone or through a combination of open and covert intervention. In any case, since 1979, Shi'ite fundamentalism has spread beyond Iran, threatening established regimes throughout the Gulf and beyond.

In the case of Iraq, militant Shi'ism is locked in a relentless war with the "atheistic" Baath Socialist Party. Combining Arab nationalism and a vaguely defined socialism, the Iraqi Baathists seized power in 1968, nationalized Western interests, including oil facilities, instituted a land reform, and replaced a feudal ruling class with a state capitalist

elite. Relations were opened up with the Soviet Union. Baath ideology is based on a secular Arabism with one of its most important emotional symbols being the struggle to reclaim

The Gulf According to Khomeini



Palestinian land (despite its inability to effect this).

The enmity between the two countries lies in centuries-old contention between the Ottoman-Arab and Persian Empires over political supremacy in the Gulf. The current conflict broke out in 1979, when

Iraq invaded Iran, hoping to capitalize on the chaos caused by the Islamic revolution. The aim of the Iraqi regime was to recover territory which had been ceded to the Shah in 1973, giving Iran independent access to the Gulf through the Shatt al-Arab waterway. But Iraq underestimated the strength of the Iranian regime. Khomeini ordered a counterattack against the "atheists of the Iraqi Baath" and Iraq was driven from the territory it briefly occupied. Since then, the Iranian demand for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein has taken on the character of a holy war.

At the other end of the Gulf, Shi'ite fundamentalism has clashed with feudal monarchies based on the elitist Sunni branch of Islam, primarily Saudi Arabia, but Kuwait and Bahrain as well. In these countries, traditional royal families used the wealth derived from oil to consolidate their rule, buy weapons and integrate themselves into the world capitalist system. Along with their guardianship of Islamic shrines, this fact has made these regimes a target of Khomeini's efforts to project Iran as the center of the Islamic world. Every year since the revolution, Iranians have used the hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, as an opportunity to agitate for militant Shi'ite demands. The Saudi massacre of 400 pilgrims in Mecca represents the most serious escalation of this confrontation to date.

Militant Islam offers an ideological rallying point for Shi'ite groups within each of these countries. Shi'is make up 60% of Iraq's population, 70%-90% of Bahrain's and 33% of Kuwait's. While a much smaller minority in Saudi Arabia, they are concentrated in the strategic oil-producing eastern part of the country. The Iranian revolution has struck a responsive chord among these people, generating struggles that will continue after the Ayatollah Khomeini is gone.

But neither Israel nor the Reagan administration had any intention of pursuing even the mild recognition of Palestinian rights called for by the treaty. In the wake of Camp David came the invasion of Lebanon. The Reagan administration shared Israel's belief that the invasion would succeed in destroying the PLO and with it the focus of Palestinian national aspirations. U.S.-made fragmentation bombs ripped through the people of Beirut. And William Casey found his bloody counterpart in Ariel Sharon, the mastermind of the massacres at Sabra and Shatilla. From these origins, the U.S.-Israeli offensive mushroomed across the region. After the PLO evacuated Beirut, Israel tried to assassinate Yassir Arafat by bombing PLO offices and homes in Tunis. The U.S. was not to be outdone by its partner in the campaign against terrorism. By 1985, a carbon copy of the raid against Arafat was carried out against Libya's Qaddafi.⁷

Back in Iran, the consolidation of an alliance between the U.S. and the Khomeini government was turning into an elusive pursuit. With the rise of Shi'ite fundamentalism in Lebanon, a new historical force was reducing Zionist occupation into Israel's Vietnam. Iranian-backed opposition was key in driving the U.S. out of Beirut when its forces leveled the U.S. Embassy and Marine barracks, killing hundreds of American personnel. When Iranian-supported Shi'ite fundamentalists seized William Buckley, chief of CIA counter-terrorist operations, virtually all U.S. intelligence assets in the region were blown. As the Reagan administration grew more isolated in the Middle East, its reliance on Israel increased. But rather than pulling back from the Iran initiative, the White House intensified its efforts by sending McFarlane and Oliver North on their disastrous mission to Teheran.

"SNOOKERED BY A GAME OF BAIT AND TRAP"

In hindsight, the U.S.-Israeli plan to woo Iran back into an accommodation has been roundly denounced as an idiotic adventure. On the politically volatile slopes of the Middle East, the administration blundered and lost its most dangerous gamble. When North, Secord and Hakim, operating under Reagan's direction, offered to overthrow the president of Iraq and secure the release of Shi'ite saboteurs jailed in Kuwait, the "battle royal" brewing within the White House could no longer be contained.

This struggle raged far beyond the individuals named by Congress and the Tower Commission. It went to the core of U.S. interests and policy. The Reagan scheme rested on the assumption that conflicts within the Iranian leadership were so great that they could be exploited to produce a basic shift in Iran's policy. This view, supported by intelligence cooked up by Israeli and CIA officials, denied the

fact that all ruling factions within Iran are united in their vision of creating an *independent capitalist state*, beholden to neither the U.S. nor Soviet Union. While the U.S. has portrayed this leadership as irrational fanatics, or divided between radicals and moderates, the truth is that it is committed to building Iran into a regional power and headquarters for Islamic revolution. There had never been a Shi'ite fundamentalist state before and the U.S. completely failed to comprehend it. Iranian sophistication at manipulating international politics was acknowledged by former White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan who declared, "They snookered us with a game of bait and trap." In this game Iran came out the winner and U.S. credibility with its Arab allies was badly damaged.

As for Israel, its relations with the U.S. are more strained than they have been in years. Evidence of conflict inside the "secret team" became known to the world when Jonathon Pollard, a U.S. citizen employed in a sensitive post at the Naval Security and Investigative Command, was arrested as an Israeli spy in 1985. After repeated denials by the Israeli government, Pollard's Israeli "handler" publicly admitted that the operation was sanctioned at the highest levels. By the time the scandal broke, the perception had grown within the U.S. ruling class that it was Israel and not the U.S. which was setting the pace of policy from one end of the Middle East to the other. In defiance of U.S. policy, Israel continues to back Iran, selling them millions of dollars of arms every month.⁸

Israel remains the U.S.'s strategic partner, but one of the consequences of the scandal is a shift towards more balance with reactionary Arab allies. This is indicated by the U.S. tilt towards Iraq and the Reagan administration's proposal to sell Saudi Arabia \$1 billion worth of arms. In this context, calls for an international conference on the Middle East may increase over the next year. Israel opposes it, but the U.S., Britain, Soviet Union and the Arab countries have all stated support for such a process. These moves do not sit well in Tel Aviv where they are viewed against the alarming background of a resurgent Palestinian resistance. From Southern Lebanon to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the newly reunified PLO is rising from the ashes of Beirut. Israel retains the upper hand, but it understands that popular support for the PLO has never been greater.

LISTING IN THE GULF

The failure of the joint U.S.-Israeli arms scheme aimed at moderating the Khomeini regime has brought a deadly turn towards war. As the largest naval armada since the Vietnam war masses around the Gulf, it's clear that the

⁷Seymour Hersh, "Target Qaddafi," *New York Times Magazine*, February 22, 1987.

⁸Patrick Seale, *London Observer*, "No Arms Shortage in Iran—Israel Helps Out," reprinted in *San Francisco Examiner*, August 18, 1987.

U.S. is not on a mission of peace to guarantee freedom of navigation. After all, less than 1% of total Gulf shipping had been disrupted prior to the U.S. reflagging of Kuwaiti tankers. And it's no secret that Iraq, not Iran, stands to gain most from attacking tankers. Its oil moves through land-based pipelines while Iran depends exclusively on shipping through the waterways of the Gulf. Nor can the U.S. seriously believe that a show of force and encouragement of Iraqi attacks will allow Iraq to defeat Iran; all military strategists agree that this is a virtual impossibility.

No. The U.S. buildup and the search for a pretext to attack Iran is aimed at continuing this reactionary war, not ending it. The Gulf war between Iran and Iraq pits the only two countries in the region which have maintained a level of independence from the U.S. By prolonging the war and deeply involving itself in its outcome, the U.S., its NATO allies, and the reactionary Gulf states all stand to come out ahead.

The immediate goals of this strategy are to isolate Iran and prevent a victory over Iraq. The U.S. needs to repair the damage done to its relations with the Arab Gulf regimes, and ultimately hopes to establish permanent military bases in the region. Underlying all this is the desire to block legitimate Soviet interests in the area. The Reagan administration apparently believes that military pressure may succeed where diplomacy did not, in forcing Iran to drop its regional ambitions.

The ruling class is now struggling over just how to conduct its politico/military war in the Gulf. Some in the foreign policy establishment continue to urge restraint, counseling that a U.S. attack would encourage the Iranian regime to pull together, rather than slowly fragment. In their view this would close the door to a future rapprochement with Iran, strengthen Soviet influence, and possibly set in motion an uncontrollable escalation. At the same time, the Pentagon is talking about mining the Iranian

Merchants of Death

The war between Iran and Iraq, which began in 1980, has grown into a vast killing field where the dead and wounded number nearly one million. Today over thirty countries, ranging from the NATO powers to the Soviet Union and China sell arms to Iran and Iraq. Most western sales are conducted by private dealers and governments who sell to both countries at once.

While most European governments pledged to comply with "Operation Staunch," their interests led them to quietly support the black market in arms and in some cases to legitimize it. An international cartel of European arms manufacturers opened up a multi-billion dollar black market business. At its core are Europe's largest munitions makers like Nobel Industries (Sweden), PRB (Belgium), SNPE (France), Muiden Chemie (Holland), Vass A.G. (W. Germany) and others.¹ Armaments industries are vital to the economies of Europe because they employ hundreds of thousands of workers and provide a degree of independence from powerful U.S. defense contractors. Britain

and France brought the black market in death to legitimate standing by selling to Iran and Iraq. Britain emphasizes sales to Iran and shipped hundreds of millions in air-defense radars and tank parts, and trained Iranian anti-aircraft gunners throughout 1986. There's no indication that this has stopped in the wake of Washington's scandal. The French government helps finance 60% of the Iraqi war debt. At the same time, they looked the other way as a French arms corporation shipped over \$100 million worth of heavy artillery shells and radar equipment to Iran.² In these activities France and Britain are motivated by more than profit. Both countries seek to fill the strategic vacuum brought on by the erosion of U.S. influence in the Gulf and Middle East. Arms sales and other commercial ties to Iran and Iraq are the leverage by which they hope to expand their influence. The presence of British and French naval forces in the Gulf is designed to assert their role in the conflict as independent forces.

The Iran-Contra scandal exposed the workings of a global

arms business divided into three circuits—called the white, gray, and black markets. The white market consists of publicly acknowledged government-to-government sales; the black market is all illegal/unsanctioned trade; and the gray market lies in between. The purpose of the gray market is to deal weapons to countries (or contra movements) that imperialist democracies are unable to back publicly, but wish to deal with in private. Although this plays itself out differently from country to country, the gray market is a global phenomenon which is assuming great importance.³ Here the "secret governments" are born in conspiracy between intelligence services, the military, private defense industries and the ruling elites. From these shadowy multi-billion dollar deals come windfall profits and, more importantly, political and military influence.

Zionist Israel is one model for how this all works. Its arms industry has long played a central role both in its economy and in projecting Israeli influence around the world. While the arms manufacturers are "privately

coast and the CIA is giving military intelligence to Iraq.

But the U.S. cannot dictate the course of history in the Persian Gulf any more. Iran is not likely to be bullied into submission. Those in Washington who believe that force can quarantine the Iranian revolution find their counterparts within Teheran who calculate that martyring their people is preferable to knuckling under.

The danger in this situation is that military dynamics, particularly in naval confrontations, have a logic of their own with an explosive potential to rapidly expand. A 1984 Rand Corporation study pointed out that:

Naval forces play an important role in globalizing regional conflicts. This is because (1) naval forces are the easiest to deploy in regional conflicts, where they either become instruments of intervention or targets; (2) to have naval combatants in close proximity with one another is destabilizing in a crisis because the general rule in naval warfare is that whoever shoots first wins; and (3) war at sea, once begun, is very difficult to contain geographically.

Naval forces present special problems because they are likely to be deployed early into a Middle East/Persian Gulf crisis, and constitute vulnerable, high value targets in the event of war...

—Frances Fukuyama, "Escalation in the Middle East and Persian Gulf," 1984.

The validity of these arguments notwithstanding, the Reagan administration appears to be licking its lips in anticipation of a military strike against Iran. To the crippled presidency, hungry to renew its glory, and to a population both frustrated and disappointed in government, such an attack may prove impossible to resist. As the ground and air war between Iran and Iraq escalates this fall and winter, divisions within the U.S. leadership will widen. At this moment, the progressive movement is called on to offer an alternative and to demand in the name of peace: Non-Intervention and Withdrawal of All U.S. Forces from the Gulf!

owned," the industries are headed by former military men and are directly represented in government. All exports are overseen by the Ministerial Committee on Weapons Transfers and the Defense Ministry Sales Office. The actual export is carried out by a private network of at least 1,000 businessmen, present and former government officers who are given permission to prospect abroad for sales opportunities. This network carried the original shipments of U.S. arms to Iran, and has supplied the South African government and Nicaraguan contras with military equipment over the years.⁴

When William Casey assumed directorship of the CIA, he organized a U.S. counterpart to the Israeli apparatus and linked the two into a powerful axis driving and funding covert actions around the world. Casey and the Reagan administration believed the private sector should play a strong role in U.S. secret operations because it is unfettered by the constraints of democracy and policy debate within government. Dubbed the "enterprise," this conspiracy was administered by men like General Secord, who served four tours of duty in Iran and was in charge of all arms sales to the Shah's Air Force between 1975 and 1978.

Amiram Nir, adviser on terrorism to Israel's president, was a key representative from the Zionist state, along with David Kimche, Director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Together the U.S. and Israel mobilized businessmen from all over the world, intelligence

agents, and their allies in countries like South Africa and South Korea to make the scheme work.

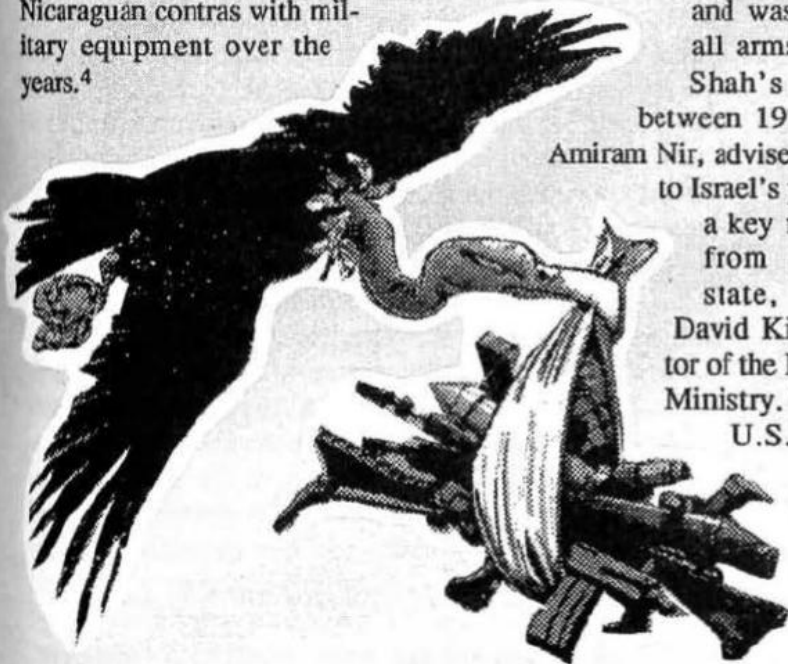
The Iran-Contra affair has weakened the U.S. "secret government" but not ended its power. The government currently admits to conducting over 50 covert operations in the world right now—only the Iranian and contra projects have been exposed to the light of day. When western leaders proclaim their "neutrality" and weep crocodile tears over the "irrational Islamic rivalries in the Persian Gulf" we should all be wary. The war between Iran and Iraq is a reactionary war where the only winners are likely to be imperialism and the arms merchants. Their thirst for profit and power is turning the Persian Gulf into a lake of blood. All the talk of peace we're likely to hear in the coming months only masks their stake in seeing the bonanza of death continue.

¹Kenneth Timmerman, "Europe's Lucrative Arms Pipeline," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 26, 1987.

²*Iran Today*, Vol. 2, No. 1.

³"Death on Delivery," *South Magazine*.

⁴NACLA, "The Israeli Connection: Arms and Money to Central America," Vol. 21, No. 2, March 1987.





DROP THE CHARGES! **THE REAL CRIME IS COLONIALISM!**

This article was reprinted from a publication of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, Fall, 1987.

The U.S. government has indicted seven people in Chicago, charging them with conspiring to aid the escape from Leavenworth Federal Prison of alleged FALN leader Oscar López-Rivera and New Afrikan freedom fighter Kojo Bomani Sababu (slave name Grailing Brown). In addition to López-Rivera and Bomani Sababu, Jaime Delgado, the former national coordinator of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Dora García, a well known Chicago *independentista* and López-Rivera's sister-in-law, are charged, as are two North Americans from California, Donna Jean Wilmot and Claude Marks, who are fugitives. The seventh current defendant is Richard Cobb, an admitted FBI informant who has already plead guilty.

All the Defendants are charged in the first count of an eight count indictment with a conspiracy to effect the escape of López-Rivera and Bomani Sababu from Leavenworth Prison as well as to transport arms and explosives in interstate commerce. Delgado is charged in two subsequent counts with travelling to and from Dallas to assist in obtaining weapons for the Leavenworth escape, and Dora García is charged in five subsequent counts with either using the phone or visiting Oscar López-Rivera in Leavenworth to assist an escape plan. López-Rivera is charged with all counts. Each count carries a potential five years sentence.

Because López-Rivera and Bomani Sababu are already

incarcerated for terms in excess of fifty years and from the charges themselves, it is clear Delgado, a key figure in the independence movement, and García, an ex-grand jury resister, are who the government wants to convict and incarcerate. Indeed, the government failed to even charge López-Rivera in an alleged plot to free him from Leavenworth in 1983, although three other now incarcerated *independentistas* were prosecuted for this. López-Rivera was not even transferred out of Leavenworth or placed in segregation, automatic actions when an escape is charged. Instead the government used his status in general population to induce, monitor, and support other escape plans by which the government sought to ensnare outside *independentistas* and/or the underground FALN. These efforts did not produce the participation by persons outside the prison which the government hoped for, but the government was not content to let it's two year effort go without some criminal prosecutions.

To understand the commitment of the U.S. government to the destruction of the Puerto Rican independence movement and the quantity of resources and sophistication of methods it will employ to this end, we can look at the now uncovered recommendations of a secret conference.

U.S. Government Prepares a Sophisticated Counter-insurgency Strategy to Combat Anticipated Rise in Militant Independence Forces

The use of law and law enforcement in a "democratic system," particularly in its application to the Puerto Rican

independence movement, was explored in detail in a secret conference entitled, "Special Seminar on Terrorism," held in 1978 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The seminar, funded by the U.S. Justice Department, gathered together experts in counter-insurgency from U.S. enforcement agencies and throughout the world, including those with experience in efforts to suppress liberation struggles in Ireland, Latin America and Africa.

The need for the conference, as reflected in the seminar planning document, is premised on the increasing growth and militancy of the Puerto Rican independence movement:

...If the judgment is made that Puerto Rico is ready to respond to a higher level of armed insurgency as a catalyst for change, the stronger of the radical groups (perhaps under a new name or proxy organization) will move to: (1) actively involve political, labor, youth and military organizations on their side, (2) embark upon a cycle of insurgency designed to shake the confidence of people in the government, (3) commit themselves to urban guerrilla actions after various South American models, i.e. Argentina, Uruguay, Cuba; and (4) invoke an international chorus from radical nations over the issue of independence and human rights for the Puerto Rican people.*

The planning documents called for the development of a specific strategy to combat, in its earliest stages, the inevitable escalation of militant support for independence. The planning materials also state the importance of control of the media to discredit independence activists, referred to repeatedly as "terrorist" and call for development and construction of a "denial system" that "by definition will deprive the terrorist of resources needed for survival: including legal resources and supportive media."

The planning documents go on to suggest specific areas within the legal system which need to be addressed in developing an effective counter-insurgency program against Puerto Rican "terrorism," including increased police powers of intelligence gathering, harsh bail policies including internment for "extremist leaders," postponement of trial, courtroom security, protection for jurors and witnesses and search and seizure laws. The documents also mention the use of highly restrictive pre-trial detention, including solitary confinement, as well as the possible sanctioning of the presence of police observers at attorney-client meetings and the opening of an accused's legal mail.

The Chicago prosecution not only reflects the application of each of the above counter-insurgency methods, but demonstrates the government will go beyond monitoring and suppressing insurgent activity to initiating and encour-

aging insurgent activity which it can monitor and control in an effort to consciously bring *independentistas* into criminal conspiracies. The evidence in the case illustrates extended and sophisticated government and particularly FBI activity to encourage escape plans for the Prisoners of War, whereby they sought to connect the POWs and their outside political supporters in criminal activity which would form the basis of criminal prosecution.

The Government's Use of Informants/Provocateurs

Although government reports and tapes produced for the defense in discovery in preparation for the criminal trial, set to begin September 21, are under protective order at the government's request, the following outline of government conduct can be deduced from the preliminary hearing, from written motions and responses as well as arguments in court, all of which are public.

1. Informant Lebosky. In September, 1984, George Lebosky, a prisoner in Leavenworth housed near Oscar López-Rivera and Kojo Bomani Sababu gratuitously offered them money and weapons which he said he would donate to help Oscar and Kojo if he could be a part of an escape plan. Lebosky continued to push his offer although he personally had access to neither item. The government, liking this idea, provided Lebosky with the name of an undercover agent who could make good on the promise to produce weapons and explosives. After Lebosky gave the phone number of the undercover agent to Oscar, the government monitored all the phone calls, mail, and attorney and civilian visits of Oscar and Kojo. Jaime Delgado is charged with meeting this undercover agent in Dallas, Texas where video and audio tapes indicate information and prices for weapons and explosives were presented by the undercover agent but no agreement was made or purchase transacted. (This is the *only* reference to Delgado in the entire case.) The agent at one point suggested drugs as an acceptable or even preferred exchange for the weapons in an obvious effort to tamish the movement's morality in hopes of discrediting it publicly.

2. Informant Cobb. From the information Lebosky was providing them, the FBI knew that Richard Cobb, another Leavenworth prisoner, was offering to fly a helicopter into Leavenworth after his anticipated early release to free Oscar López-Rivera and Kojo Bomani Sababu. The government also knew Cobb had made plans with other prisoners and ex-prisoners involving a variety of escape plans and other criminal activities. Instead of stopping Cobb's release and prosecuting him or at least disciplining him, the FBI assured his release, monitored him in his criminal endeavors* and, at the propitious moment, confronted

*Excerpted from "New Developments in Judicial Repression: The Use of Counter-Insurgency Methods against Political Activists," Michael Deutsch; *Journal of Law and Social Change*, New York University Law School, Fall 1987.

*These included burglary of a gunstore, embezzlement, dope trafficking and possession of illegal weapons.

Cobb with what they knew. From at least October, 1985, through May, 1986, when the government first charged Kojo and Oscar, Cobb's role under government tutelage was to try to induce, cajole and pressure Oscar to bring outside people into Cobb's helicopter escape plan. Saying he was paying for safehouses and needed to see some activity, Cobb was even given false identification and a disguise to re-enter Leavenworth to visit Kojo and to attempt to get things going; Cobb kept urging Kojo and Oscar to have "Oscar's people" contact him. Cobb continued to urge action long after Oscar indicated he did not want to participate. The government also released and monitored another prisoner because the FBI believed he would assist and bring others into an escape plan.

3. Surveillance of Oscar López-Rivera and Kojo Bonani Sababu.

The other part of the government plan after setting the bait with Lebosky and Cobb was to monitor every contact between Oscar and Kojo, and with persons who had contact with them. They did this by taping every phone call, opening every letter and bugging all visits—including legal visits to López-Rivera—as well as bugging motel rooms and rented cars used by visitors when they came to Kansas to see him. FBI agents in five states stepped up their monitoring of pro-independence activists and obtained wiretap authorizations on the representations that they were investigating a massive "seditious conspiracy" on a national scale involving large segments of the Puerto Rican, revolutionary Black Nationalist and anti-imperialist North American movements. Enormous manpower and material resources were pressed into the investigation.

However, by June, 1986, the FBI had little to show for their efforts. Two North Americans had allegedly purchased some plastic explosives from the undercover agent in Louisiana, taking it to California, but they disappeared instantaneously one month later on June 12, 1985 even while under surveillance after they discovered a bugging device which the FBI had placed in their car. There was no indication the explosives were intended for an escape attempt and the alleged purchasers have not been found. Also, *no one ever contacted Cobb*, and FBI efforts through Cobb to get others to join him on the helicopter escape were totally unsuccessful.

With little to show for their machinations, massive surveillance and electronic monitoring, in May of 1986, the FBI exposed their investigation and seized the briefcase of a legal worker as she exited a visit with Oscar López-Rivera. The FBI hoped to find proof that the conspiracy to escape, which they had initially fostered, was still being attempted and that the visitors were involved. The papers seized from legal worker Viola Salgado, who was accompanied by defendant Dora García, did not make reference to a prison escape or any illicit conspiracy.

FBI COMMENCES PROSECUTION

Needing to justify the two year investigation and with time indicating a cessation of interest in their escape plot other than by Cobb, the FBI on July 3, 1986 arrested Jaime Delgado, Dora García and Viola Salgado, a legal worker at Chicago's Westtown Community Law Office. In a big, pre-4th of July press conference, the FBI and U.S. Attorney announced it had uncovered a major national "terrorist" plot and they sought in court to hold the arrestees without bond because of their supposed danger to the community. At the subsequent preliminary hearing the government's evidence was so weak that all three were granted relatively low property bonds and Viola Salgado was not even charged in the subsequent (current) indictment. The FBI's efforts to discredit the independence movement in the press by their characterization of the arrestees received far more coverage however, than did the magistrate's recognition of the weakness of the government's case. The evidence against Dora García consists of bugged phone conversations and Leavenworth visits with Oscar López-Rivera, small portions of which the government strains to interpret as showing complicity in the escape attempt.

The case illustrates that the U.S. government, in addition to infiltration, intelligence gathering and extreme repression of "illegal" or unwanted acts supporting independence, will also take an active role in initiating and supporting conspiracies which it can monitor and control. Government efforts here were designed to produce "illegal activity" to form a basis for incarcerating supporters of the independence movement and isolating those on the inside by providing a justification for harsher, more restrictive conditions in the future.

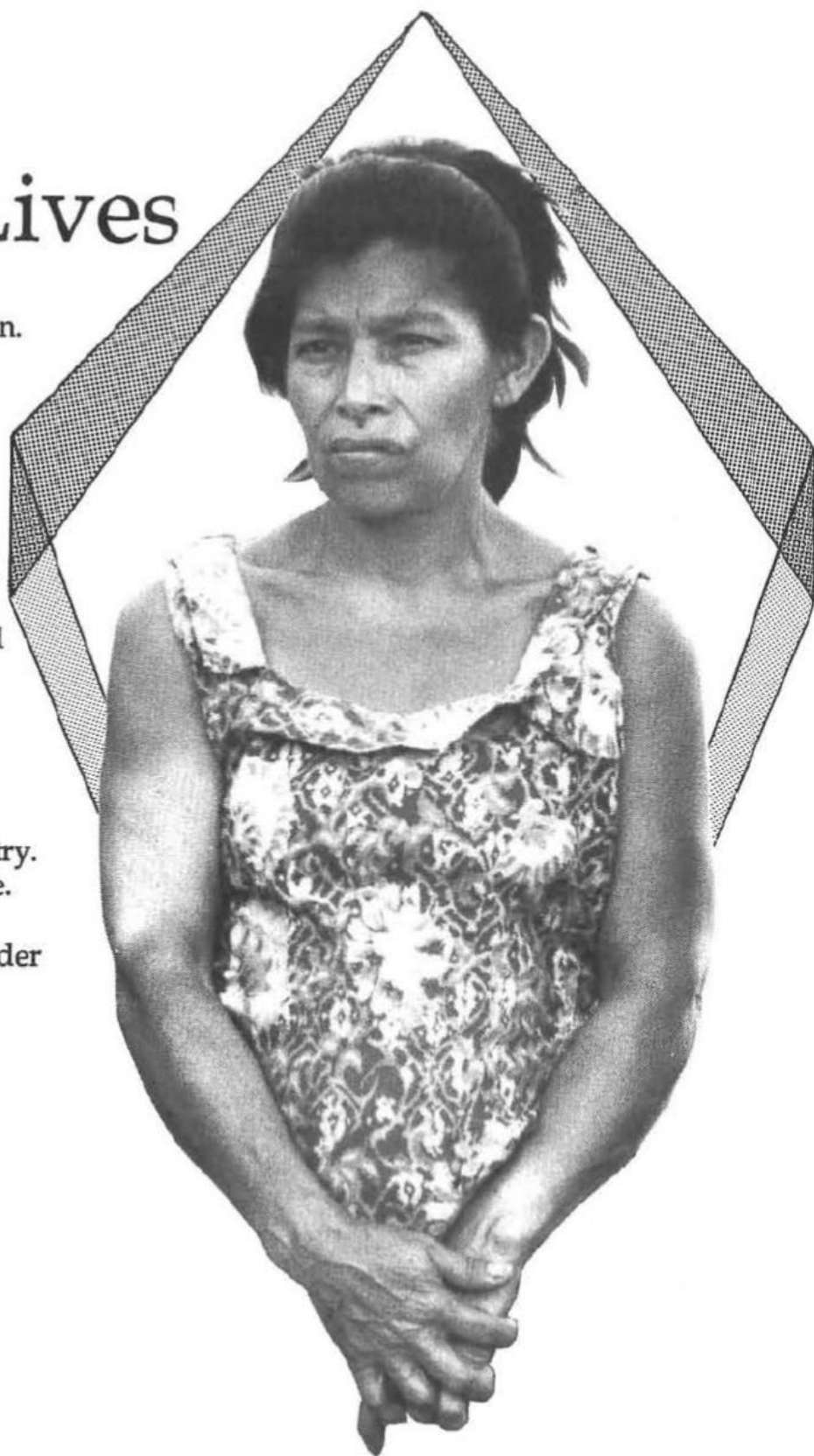
Despite the U.S. government's efforts, Puerto Rico's independence cannot be stopped. To the degree that imperialism has developed newer and more repressive ways to fight national liberation, history has shown that people who are committed and determined to struggle, will find creative ways to be victorious. Many of the repressive tactics now employed by U.S. imperialism domestically are tactics which other national liberation movements have defeated long ago. That the techniques become progressively brutal is undeniable. But, examples from all over Latin America, Africa and Asia, prove the slogan *the greater the repression, the stronger the resistance*.

The dialectic of our struggle is a compelling force which has allowed us to overcome the obstacles of the moment. Beginning in 1898 and continuing with each stage of struggle, U.S. imperialism has applied the "newest" and "best" of its repressive techniques. At each stage, the independence movement has survived and surpassed the most brutal acts with a renewed level of struggle and commitment. The most the U.S. can hope to accomplish is to delay the struggle for freedom, to expect to stop it is anti-historical. ■

Precious Lives

Everyone's face is etched with pain.
Reality is hurting.
Tears spring quickly
to the mother's eyes
as we pass through galleries
of children who have died.
Young people carry photos
in their wallets
of their friends who died fighting.
Everywhere the names of the dead
call out—
proclaiming the cost.
Childcare centers, schools,
hospitals and cooperatives
spring up upon their graves.
The dead have a grip on this country.
They won't let go of their purchase.
Contra attacks and yanki threats
merely make their bones rattle harder
as they whisper a challenge
into every open ear.

-- Annie Johnston



El Salvador

TIME OF DECISION

Interview with Ramón Cardona, representative
of the International Commission of the FMLN/FDR
to the United States

Breakthrough is honored to present this interview with Ramón Cardona, representative of the International Commission of the FMLN/FDR to the United States. More than at any other time in the recent past, El Salvador is at a revolutionary crossroads. In this situation, the threat of U.S. escalation looms larger than ever. But there is an alternative. The FMLN/FDR has shown the capacity to grow and develop in the face of the most sophisticated U.S. counterinsurgency. They have consistently put forward proposals to resolve the war through a process of dialogue and negotiations, and their plan for a broad government of national unity, representing all sectors of Salvadoran society, provides a platform for peace with dignity for the people of El Salvador.

This prospect is anathema to the U.S. ruling elite, which appears determined to prop up Duarte to the bitter end. But there are many people in this country who can be won, not only to the demand to end U.S. intervention in El Salvador, but to explicit support for the program and vision of the FMLN/FDR.

In the following interview, Ramón Cardona discusses the current political/military situation in El Salvador, the crisis for the Duarte government and the U.S., and the impact of the Guatemala Accord on the Salvadoran struggle.



Breakthrough: *It seems that over the past year El Salvador has been plunged into a deepening crisis that has now reached a breaking point. Major national newspapers like the New York Times and Washington Post are running headlines like "Rebels Gain While Duarte Falters." What is behind this crisis and how is it being played out?*

Ramón Cardona: When Duarte came on board, he promised four major things to the Salvadoran people. He promised peace through dialogue with the guerrilla forces; he promised reactivation of the economy; he promised full respect for human rights; and he also promised democracy with the participation of broad sectors of the society. Within a year's time, those middle class sectors and those other social forces, labor forces, which still believed in change in El Salvador through these kinds of means, began to distance themselves from Duarte.

A qualitative change in the popular movement came in January 1985, when Duarte imposed the International

Monetary Fund and AID proposal for a comprehensive package of austerity economic measures. The currency was devalued by 100%, taxes were increased on already taxable items and new taxes added to non-taxable items, so prices on electricity and basic consumer goods just shot up.

The fundamental cause of the crisis is found in the structure of the system in El Salvador. Since the collapse of the Central American Common Market, El Salvador's output has been on the decline. Being primarily an export-oriented agricultural economy, this has been affected also by international factors, such as diminishing prices for our products—coffee, cotton and sugar. Production has fallen over 50% in the last six years and more recently, to make matters worse, we had a drought in the eastern part of the country. The economic counterinsurgency plan cannot resolve this worsening situation. Meanwhile, the traditional oligarchy, especially the landowners, has been opposed to reforms within the economy. This has its ramifications within the political scene as well. It has caused an increase



in unemployment, inflation, scarcity of some products and rationing of others, such as electricity. Although the demands of the mass movement for change within this area were stopped by the genocide of the early '80s, the economic crisis encouraged factory workers to start organizing back in 1983 to better their living and working conditions.

So in January 1985, there was a call by several labor coalitions and in early February the UNTS, the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers, was formed. From that moment on, it has been the broadest organized forum of unions, cooperatives, campesino associations and some public employees unions. A key aspect of the UNTS is the involvement of forces that had given some critical support to Duarte back in '84. In its first year of existence, it had a huge demonstration practically every month, and by the end of 1986 it had been able to coordinate labor strikes.

When the earthquake hit El Salvador in October 1986, only the UNTS, with the Christian community bases in the archdiocese of San Salvador, really provided true support

to the people who had been affected.

The urban movement has now been joined by the repopulation movement of the 20% of people of El Salvador who, through five or six years of counterinsurgency, have been displaced from their communities and are now either within the cities of El Salvador or in Honduras in refugee camps or in other Central American countries or in the United States. The Phoenix Operation, which had as one of its objectives moving every civilian out of the Guazapa area by force, also became the catalyst for different refugee organizations to join together in a national coordinating body. Since last year they have been grouping families and gathering enough resources and calling for international accompaniment, especially by religious people and especially from the United States, to go back, to resettle, to repopulate and start all over again. The most dramatic move around this will be the move that the Mesa Grande refugee camp in Honduras is preparing to do later on this year. We're talking about 11,000 refugees in this camp who have decided collectively to come back to El

Salvador. This means that, besides fighting for the right to live and work where they choose and to regain the lands that are theirs, they are destabilizing one of the major fundamental policies of counterinsurgency, which is depopulation.

By the time of the UNTS' fourth assembly last May, it had broadened itself to include sectors other than unions, workers or campesinos. Unidad Universitario, University Unity, a coalition that is made up of students, faculty, workers and administrators, and CRIPDES, one of the major organizations of refugees in El Salvador, are now officially part of the UNTS.

The official demands of the UNTS are: 1) the resignation of Duarte; 2) the recomposition of the government along pluralistic and patriotic lines; 3) that the solution to our national crisis can only be found among Salvadorans; 4) U.S. out of El Salvador. Their official slogan is "With organization, with the unity of the people and workers, we advance towards triumph."

A key aspect of this movement is the radicalization process. In a generalized way, not just among the leadership, there is a clear consciousness and political position that the only way to achieve better working conditions, decent wages, job security, and human rights is by changing the system. So you can talk to any member of any of the organizations that are part of the UNTS and what they'll say is that we need an overall change in the system, not a change of Duarte, not a change of government, not the elections coming next year. The firmness of that thought has now been tested on the streets, in the cities of El Salvador. How? By physical confrontations with the security forces. Each demonstration, each strike, each occupation now involves this kind of confrontation.

The mass movement is not an organic extension of the

Salvadoran reality. People are used to measuring wars with the yardstick of conventional warfare, with little understanding of the intricacies of guerrilla warfare. Having been able by 1983 to consolidate zones of control, the FMLN needed to expand political and military activity

We are a real alternative political force capable of governing in El Salvador.

to other parts of the country. But in order to counter the reinforced armed forces, especially the air force, the FMLN, after careful analysis, made the decision to break down its forces into small units which would expand the war to over ten new areas of the country. Especially important was the whole western part of the country, where the second largest city, Santa Ana, is located. The tactics to be used included attrition (wearing down the armed forces bit by bit) and sabotage against the war economy. The mobility of these units provided little target to the enemy and enabled the FMLN to politicize and organize the population within these new theaters of operation.

Two years later the FMLN General Command evaluated these changes and concluded that we had achieved very positive results.

- Our forces had assimilated very skillfully the art of guerrilla warfare.
- We had consolidated new areas throughout the country.
- We had incorporated so many new people into our ranks that we had, in effect, another clandestine army and militia.

All of this has had a tremendous impact on El Salvador's armed forces. They have taken a high level of casualties. It has made their own strategy inoperable and forced them to change their plans. By the end of 1986, we had reached a new level of strength, capacity and organization. We began a new phase of our strategy. While maintaining the general offensive by small units on a daily basis, we can now concentrate enough military forces to carry out attacks on both medium and large-size government targets. Now, on a weekly basis, military outposts, medium-sized garrisons and large convoys are attacked.

In January 1987, we took the garrison of Osicala in Morazan province. We destroyed the garrison of Delicias Concepción in a battle that lasted seven hours. Likewise, we can look to examples of similar attacks in Chalatenango, where major ambushes against convoys have taken place. Within two months of these actions, we took the headquarters of one of the six brigades that make up the Salvadoran Armed Forces, the El Paraiso Barracks of the Fourth Brigade in Chalatenango. This huge and successful

The peace plan is just a first step. It's not the solution. The Reagan administration must stop the aggression and intervention.

FMLN/FDR, but another structure. But in terms of the political objectives, in terms of a political direction, it is moving in the same parallel direction. That is very, very important.

BT: *One of the most dramatic developments in the past period has been the acceleration of the FMLN's war against the Duarte regime. How do you assess the FMLN's military strategy in this period?*

RC: This is perhaps the least understood factor in the

military operation of the FMLN is known worldwide. There were hundreds of casualties and the complete destruction of the facilities. Its consequences were not only military, but political and psychological. The success of this operation is clearly the result of a dynamic and growing process. The FMLN forces have not been defeated as U.S. and Salvadoran government propaganda has been claiming for the last several years.

After the devastating attack on El Paraiso, the Salvadoran military had been comforting themselves, saying that the FMLN could only carry out these strategic military defeats once in a while. But El Paraiso was only the central action of a national campaign which included three other military actions in other parts of the country. With these actions the last remaining illusion of the Salvadoran army was broken.

The success of this second phase of the FMLN strategy has lowered the morale of the Salvadoran military, increased distrust of the officers and U.S. advisers, heightened uncertainty as to what strategy to follow and has forced the military aspect of the U.S./Duarte counterinsurgency plan, "United to Reconstruct," into a weak position, making its collapse in the future definite. The "United to Reconstruct" plan was the central program of the U.S. and Salvadoran army to win the hearts and minds of the Salvadoran people in order to isolate the guerrilla forces and eventually to defeat them. Unlike past pacification programs, it was controlled by the armed forces, with a budget of over \$15 million at its disposal. The plan was to cover the entire country in the attempt to pacify the people. They would create civic defense projects and bring in development projects. Then the military would try to push the FMLN forces to the northernmost part of the country, remove them from the populated sectors and eventually annihilate them. The gigantic Phoenix operation against the Guazapa area in early 1986 was the start of the project. It has failed in every one of its goals and objectives.

Now after El Paraiso, the U.S. Ambassador in El Salvador has speculated that the war in El Salvador will continue for six to eight more years. Blandon, the Chief of Armed Forces, when asked the same thing, said, "As a good soldier, I cannot say when this war will be over." Now that's a major change. When these guys were talking years ago, they'd say, "Six months, we'll have them all wiped out." And then one year, and then two years, and now, you know, some of them are talking about how at the end of the century, they'll still be fighting.

BT: Given this picture, how can Duarte

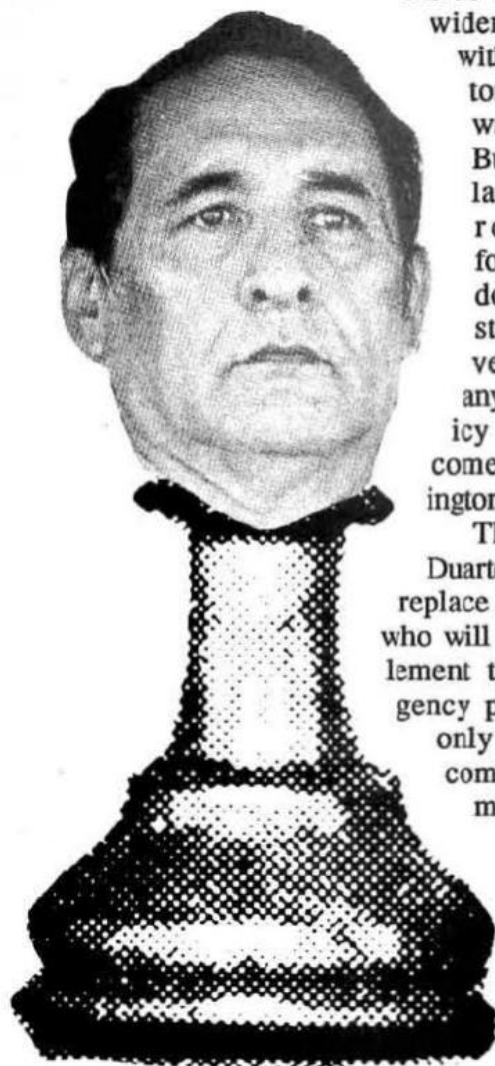
survive? Do you think the U.S. is likely to shift its strategy in El Salvador as a way of dealing with this crisis?

RC: Up to now, the Reagan administration has been able to unite the ruling circles in this country on its policy of war towards El Salvador. Apparently they don't understand the devastating impact of the total collapse of their strategy for El Salvador. Instead of being creative and urging a negotiated solution by all interested Salvadoran sectors, they keep supplying hundreds of millions of dollars year after year. The current amount of aid to El Salvador is \$2 million a day.

The basic goal which the administration set out for El Salvador seven years ago—to destroy all opposition to the Duarte regime—is what is at the heart of the present U.S. policy. Without serious challenges to it or initiatives coming either from the Republican moderates or Democratic liberals. The coming confrontation and social explosions



UNTS demonstration in San Salvador. The popular movement has developed as a direct challenge to the Duarte regime.



inside El Salvador will widen some cracks within the ruling sector's position towards El Salvador. But until the popular movement and revolutionary forces in El Salvador reach a higher state, it appears very unlikely that any meaningful policy changes will come out of Washington.

They could ease Duarte out, but only to replace him with people who will continue to implement the counterinsurgency plan. That would only happen if it becomes untenable to maintain Duarte, if he becomes extremely isolated, since Duarte symbolizes a victory for U.S. foreign policy. If Duarte is thrown

out of power by the right, the consequences are not only for El Salvador, but for all of Central America, especially right next door with Cerezo in Guatemala. This would be tantamount to declaring that this particular model to contain liberation movements is not feasible.

BT: *To follow up on that, what effect, if any, do you see a possible Democratic victory in 1988 having on U.S. policy towards El Salvador?*

RC: If the Democrats were to win the next presidential election, as of now they haven't elaborated an alternative to the Reagan administration's policy on El Salvador. What they have put out so far is completely compatible with the current administration policy. The leadership of the Democratic party has stopped any kind of individual moves to rock the boat. There are liberals, progressive minded U.S. representatives, and we know that they have made attempts and then they have been shut down. For example, there were hearings on El Salvador on April 2nd. The El Paraiso action took place on the night of March 31st. The following day, individual Senators and Representatives said "Why did this happen? We have to rethink and reassess policy to El Salvador." That was the day after

El Paraiso and the day before the hearing. The day of the hearings, nobody mentioned El Paraiso. How we interpret that is that by then the leadership had called them and said, "Please don't meddle with it; it's too controversial." We cannot say for sure what they'll do, but right now their position is one of complicity.

BT: *If the U.S. isn't willing to back down in El Salvador, it appears that their only option is to increase repression. In the past few months, we've seen increasing evidence of this. How do you analyze these developments?*

RC: Before we had selective repression against cadres, organizers, and activists. Now they are moving more into the open with a much more systematic repression. To give you an example, just during the month of May, five cooperative members in the eastern part of El Salvador were killed, accused of collaborating with the guerrilla forces. In Chalatenango province, three campesinos of the San Jose repopulation were captured, tortured, and their throats were slashed. Miraculously they survived. The political prisoners, which are over 1000 in El Salvador, went on a hunger strike demanding full amnesty last May 25. A week later the UNTS was holding a demonstration in their support outside of the Mariona prison and when they were leaving, Julio Portillo, one of the main union leaders in El Salvador, was shot in the back, a clear attempt to assassinate this leader. The office of COMADRES, the Mother's Committee for Human Rights, Political Prisoners and Disappeared in El Salvador, was destroyed by a bomb and two women who were there were injured. Just a few days later another COMADRES woman was run down with a car and killed. She had just participated in a public demonstration and one of the government vehicles used to follow the demonstrators was used to run down her and her small child. The child survived but she was killed. The Lutheran Church's office, which deals with services for refugees inside El Salvador, was ransacked, equipment stolen, money stolen and the people threatened in front of their office. The Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez death squad has come out publicly again and on June 22 they put out a list of 14 students and faculty telling them to leave El Salvador within 48 hours or else they were going to be executed by the squad.

We know that this move from selective repression to much more open repression was discussed when Philip Habib, Elliot Abrams and Fred Ikle from the Defense Department were in El Salvador in June. And we feel that they gave the green light. They felt it wasn't going to hurt them in Washington.

In response to this repression, the mass movement has taken the initiative to lay the blame on Duarte, the High Command, and the U.S. Embassy. It is because of their designs that repression is escalating to this point. The death squads are nothing but policemen who take off their uniforms and put civilian clothing on to go around and capture people and terrorize people. Unlike the early

1980s however, the people are not leaving El Salvador any longer under this threat. Rather they are facing them off.

To give a concrete example, in the countryside, several villages have been attacked recently. Especially

those that are being repopulated have been targeted to be depopulated again. In the past, people

from an entire area had to just leave their home, escape these military offensives. People are not doing that any more. They are facing the military and challenging them, "Alright, you're here. You have the weapons. You can kill us but we're not going to leave." This is the level of initiative and confrontation against the repression in El Salvador. But it will increase because the security forces leaders implied that they're going to resort again to genocide and the death squads. The difference now is that we have a much higher level of organization, self-defense committees and an army, a revolutionary army, which is a major dissuading factor against them because they know that if they touch people, that some of them will also go.

BT: Could you comment on the Guatemala Agreement and its implications for the FMLN/ FDR?

RC: On August 11, 1987, the General Command of the FMLN issued a communique regarding the meeting of the Central American presidents in Guatemala. Perhaps the best way to answer that question is to summarize this communique.

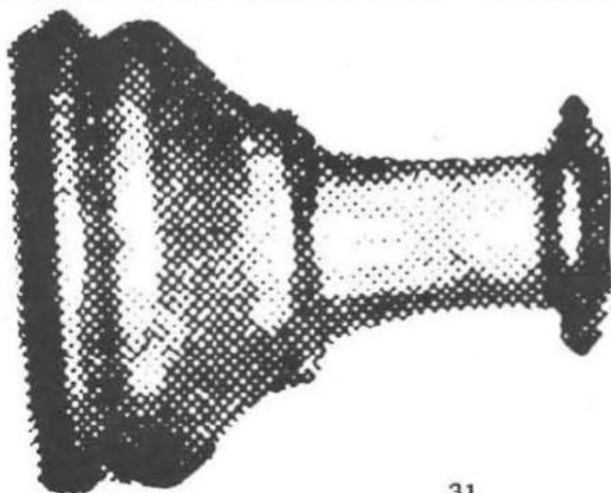
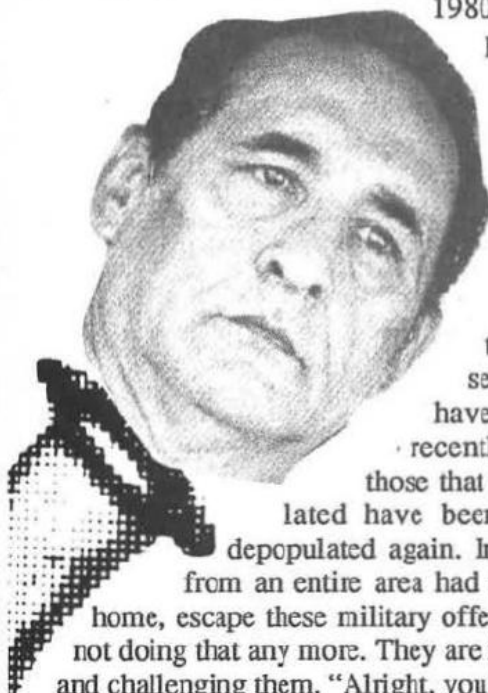
The first point made by the General Command is

that the FMLN has always welcomed efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Central America. The second is that the Guatemalan Agreement establishes a general context favorable for a continuation of the dialogue in El Salvador. It talks about the fact that dialogue between the FMLN/FDR and the Salvadoran government was initiated in La Palma in October, 1984 and continued in Ayagualo in November of the same year. In both meetings agreements were reached to establish a commitment to continue dialogue. In the communique, we stated our readiness to immediately hold meetings with Duarte's government, either inside or outside of El Salvador. Our agenda would include stopping external logistical supplies to both sides, a cease-fire and comprehensive negotiations.

The General Command noted that Duarte was forced to sign the Agreement out of serious political and military weakness. The Duarte government lacks the capacity to carry forth real democratization. It hasn't been able to resolve labor conflicts or to control the army.

Another important point is the absolute dissimilarity between the FMLN and the Nicaraguan contras. In El Salvador, the FMLN enjoys tremendous popular support and dual power can be said to exist within the country. The contras, on the other hand, are an instrument created by the Reagan administration outside of the country, in order to attack the people of Nicaragua and destabilize the revolution. It is based in Honduras; it is created, financed, and run by the U.S. government and is unable to survive without foreign assistance. In the words of the communique, "Consequently, it is absolutely contrary to reality and totally unacceptable to try to establish similarity or symmetry between the FMLN and the Nicaraguan contras."

In terms of the response of the anti-intervention movement in this country, first of all they should welcome the peace plan. But at the same time you must realize that this is just a first step. It's not the solution. The Reagan administration must stop the aggression and intervention. Until that happens, the conflict will not stop. Until negotiations and a dialogue are held, there is no way that peace can be obtained for El Salvador. The anti-war movement must not demobilize. It will be necessary to work harder to make sure that our objectives are achieved.



BT: Everything you've said leads to the inescapable conclusion that the U.S. is going to escalate its war against the people of El Salvador. How do you see this process taking place and how are you preparing to meet it?

RC: This administration's objectives are set on El Salvador. Since this administration came into power, El Salvador became one of their highest international priori-

ties. If you remember, Haig, when he was Secretary of State, said, "We are drawing the line in El Salvador." They haven't erased that from their agenda. They have adopted a new tactic, which is just to keep it silent, especially here in the United States and not to raise concerns about it. But that objective is set and there is a major challenge up against it.

Given that we don't see any major challenges from the Democratic Party or from the public in the United States,



Strong Voices Towards Victory!

RADIO
FARABUNDO
MARTI DEL
FMLN

Voz del Pueblo Salvadoreño en Lucha



Radio Venceremos and Radio Farabundo Martí are the official radio stations of the Salvadoran Revolution. Breakthrough recently had the opportunity to talk with Ana Hernandez, a representative of the radio stations, during a nationwide tour to raise support for the radio projects.

For more information about the situation in El Salvador or about the Radios, write to: RV-RFM, Apartado Postal 7-907, Mexico, D.F. To contribute to the campaign for Radio Venceremos and Radio Farabundo Martí, please contact: Strong Voices Towards Victory Campaign, P.O. Box 3491, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008. Make checks payable to: El Salvador's Link.

Breakthrough: Can you tell us what these Radios are, when and why they developed and the role they play in the revolutionary process?

Ana Hernandez: Radio Venceremos developed in 1981 and Radio Farabundo Martí in 1982, during a period of intense government repression when the popular movement lacked any access to the media. The revolutionary movement had always wanted to have a radio system which would not be subject to the government's restrictions. However, it was not until 1981, when the zones of control were established, that it became possible to set up studios and be sure they would not be destroyed.

Our programs are directed towards the general population. We have national and international news, a section entitled "On Our Feet, In Strug-

gle," where we broadcast information on trade union struggles. This has been very important. Prior to the development of the radio, when a union or factory went out on strike, it was impossible to inform the Salvadoran people about what was happening. It made it a lot easier for the government to send in troops to repress the strike. But now, when a strike breaks out, we broadcast news of it around the world.

We also inform the people about the development of the war, the battles between the revolutionary army and Duarte's army. We are the only media that does this! The other radios can only broadcast what the Armed Forces media committee tells them. This has been very interesting! Because whenever the guerrilla forces have attacked the army, the army always denies it. But when correspondents from our stations accompany the columns and broadcast, live, the take-over and destruction of El Paraíso barracks, then despite all of Duarte's lies, the people can hear not only our reporting, but also the action as it is occurring.

BT: What do you do in order to incorporate the people into the radio system?

AH: Well, we operate in the zones of control and we have worked with the women and children of these zones. For example, we spoke to some children who were learning to read. We told them that when they learned how to read and write they could develop a program and broadcast it. So they wrote songs and poetry. They did everything from operating the equipment to broadcasting the news,

which hardly knows about the situation of El Salvador—the mass media is not writing it, and the left forces of this country don't have the means to fill that informational vacuum—this administration will respond by escalating.

For the last four or five years, United States forces in Honduras have become a permanent feature. This year the 82nd Airborne Division was carrying out maneuvers just ten kilometers from the border of El Salvador. In February, there were six cross-border runs from Honduras

and, we believe, from U.S. military personnel flying helicopters against civilians and against our forces inside El Salvador. Then in early June there were six other incursions by Honduran forces. We feel that the United States is completely behind that.

As for a possible scenario, first we see the surgical type of operation, saturation air raids, assault by commando-type teams, shelling from boats, warships from the coast. And then the use of indirect forces like the Honduran

according to their skills and level, of course!

Our programs for women aim to counter the government's psychological warfare against women. We carry out interviews with women active in the revolutionary movement, women market vendors, teachers, etc. We talk to them and ask about their lives, how they interpret what they see on TV and hear on the radios. We also have literacy and health care programs, teaching them how to vaccinate and give first aid to children. Women are both the announcers and do the technical

work.

Many women work in the radios. As women we have been taught to think that we are not as technically capable as men. Many of us were taught to believe that women should stay home or be secretaries. However, this vision contradicts the needs of a revolutionary process. Here neither men nor women have the required technical training. The revolutionary process has been a school for us, because we all have the opportunity to contribute, to think, to speak and to learn.



army, for instance. Then we know if that fails, U.S. forces.

Unlike Nicaragua, we have not had U.S. forces invading our country, so it's a completely new experience for us psychologically—what it means and how we are going to meet them, and overcome them. But we are very confident of the level of experience that we have reached in El Salvador. We have a very capable vanguard, clear in our strategic thinking and our capacity to increasingly neutralize the United States plan and be ready when the government starts to collapse and the armed forces and the United States move directly against us. We are politically and militarily preparing for that and psychologically as well.

BT: *Over the past years, the FMLN/FDR has put forward numerous proposals for a dialogue to end the war and for a plan to reconstitute a government based on*

the participation of broad sectors of the population. Could you talk about your most recent proposal and how it's being received in El Salvador?

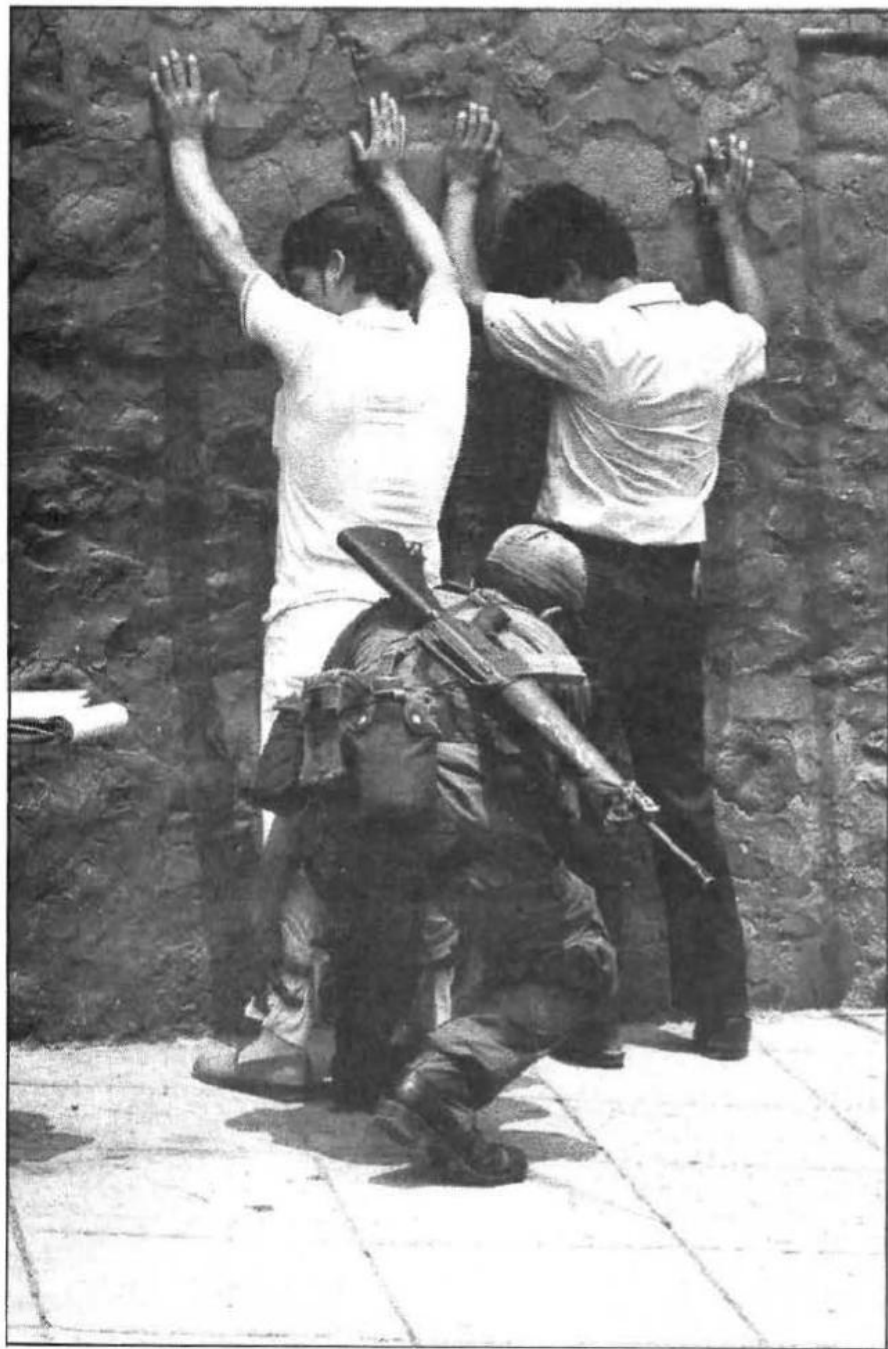
RC: We have put out various proposals and initiatives, most recently on May 26th, establishing the need to renew the dialogue in a comprehensive way. We also put out 18 points to humanize the war in El Salvador. If they stop aerial bombardment and strafing, we will stop the use of mines. If they stop other things, we'll stop sabotage, and so on and so forth.

Now, the most clearly positive effect this process has had is to align a wide variety of sectors within El Salvador who see this initiative from us in a very positive light, and publicly have expressed this sentiment. This last position that we put out on May 26th had a very wide favorable response throughout El Salvador. An editorial in the news-

paper *El Mundo*, radio stations, the Catholic University, in other words, forces and institutions which are not with us, which fear us in fact, are coming out and saying "Here's a chance, let's grab it. Let's start talking now about that." In addition these different sectors have begun to adopt within their own platforms, some positions which we had previously put out, for example, recomposition of the government with the participation of broad sectors in El Salvador. Secondly, it's clear for people that we don't want just a peace for the sake of peace, that we're tired of war. No, it's a peace related to the urgent needs of the situation in El Salvador.

What we're talking about is that we are willing to be one more force to be part of this recomposition of the government that will begin to do away with the austerity packages, that will do away with the repressive apparatus, that will release political prisoners, that will negotiate a cease-fire and would set up the basis for future free elections. And we have established ourselves publicly that we are willing to be just one force within all that. We are not afraid of that because of the popular support that the FMLN/FDR enjoys throughout the country.

One of the things that you must do in this country is to let more forces, more progressive forces, the public know more about our movement, know more about the strength of it, know how we're reaching higher levels of confrontation, and that we are now in a favorable position. You need to go completely against the State Department, the CIA and the NSC attempts to discredit us as subversives and terrorists, to show the people how we are a real alternative political force capable of governing in El Salvador. ■



SANCTUARY MEANS



STOPPING THE WAR

an interview with Sanctuary activists Renny Golden and Michael McConnell

In the early 1980s thousands of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees fled the U.S.-sponsored wars in their countries. Many came to the United States. However, the U.S. government policy of repression pursued them. Their demands for political asylum were denied. Many were rounded up by the INS, thrown into barbed-wire detention camps and then deported back to their countries to face the repression they fled.

In response, members of the religious community adopted Sanctuary, welcoming these refugees into their communities in defiance of U.S. government policy and laws. Despite U.S. government attempts to intimidate the Sanctuary movement through the trials of Sanctuary workers in Tucson, Arizona, it continues to grow. Soon five hundred churches, synagogues and other institutions—along with a growing list of cities—will have declared public sanctuary.

Renny Golden and Michael McConnell are members of the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America. They co-authored the book, Sanctuary, the New Underground Railroad. Currently, they are working on a book which will deal with the themes of resistance and solidarity.

BT: *The Sanctuary movement emerged in response to the tremendous numbers of refugees who fled El Salvador and Guatemala in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These people were fleeing incredible repression which was being carried out by regimes backed by the U.S. How does the Sanctuary movement see the rela-*

tionship between their work in the refugee community and the larger questions of U.S. policy in Central America?

Michael McConnell and Renny Golden: We feel the treatment of refugees is really just an extension of the low

intensity conflict in Central America. Part of the low intensity conflict is to deceive the people in the United States about what is happening there. And as refugees get a platform to speak, that really counters the disinformation or the psychological warfare part of low intensity warfare here. We've also seen as part of low intensity conflict that the civilians are the targets and the creation of refugees is actually an important part of the strategy. You remove people to make free-fire zones; you separate the masses of people from the guerrilla forces. And the bombings, the counterinsurgency raids into the countryside, all have created refugees. Yet when the refugees come here, they of course can't be given political asylum, because then all of that connection will be made more public. So the denial of those claims is very integral to the low intensity conflict—to keep it hidden, to keep it "clean" and so forth. So Sanctuary, I think at its best, has been one domestic counter to that low intensity conflict, both in its dealings with refugees and its ability to expose the war.

BT: *What is it about the situation of refugees that has motivated many in the religious community to take up the issue of Sanctuary with the risks involved?*

MM & RG: Sanctuary is a little like working backwards, but in a way, it's the impulse that these are real people; these are people who are being killed or in some way exiled. And what can we do? We certainly have to harbor them and protect them, but we also have to get at the causes. For what caused them to be exiled and tortured and killed? And that goes back to the political policies, but it also goes back to economic policies. We have to see those connections.

One of the things the refugees have brought with them is a theology of liberation that is not just intellectual to them, but has been part of their lives. To a certain degree within the Sanctuary movement and some of the other movements in the religious community recently, liberation theology has made more sense as a belief, as a way of life or as an understanding of the religious tradition. For those who profess to be Christians or profess to be Jews, there's something in them that I think is touched by this theology. It makes sense out of the world in a way, not only from the faith perspective, but the political-economic realities in a way that people have been confused about.

We have had five years of conscientization within the Sanctuary movement. When you look at the infiltration, the break-ins, the surveillance by the FBI, the reaction of the government indicting workers, I think that people have learned more first hand within the movement of the power of the U.S. government and begun to do some analysis of why this is happening. I think it has forced some people to really be driven by certain questions—"Well, why is the government doing this?"—and then seeing the comparisons with past times, learning some history about Latin America and U.S. intervention—36 military interventions in Central America since 1900. And people start raising

more fundamental questions and I think their world view begins to change. So I think that Sanctuary, in that way, has had a conscientizing effect on people in the United States.

BT: *How do you see the question of non-violence as it relates to the people of Central America?*

MM & RG: The Sanctuary movement upholds the principles of non-violence and people's right to self-determination. The North American religious sector's choice of non-violent change does not and cannot be imposed upon the lives of peasants and impoverished workers tortured, starved and strafe-bombed daily by armies trained and funded by the U.S. The fundamental right to decide their own fate and method of struggle is the political and ethical right and responsibility of Central Americans.

Many in the Sanctuary movement choose to consider issues of violence and non-violence from the perspective of the Third World church. For instance, the Kairos document written by 150 South African theologians and Black South African church leaders insists that labeling all physical force violence allows the religious sector to take sides while ostensibly remaining neutral. Further, such a definition appropriates the apartheid regime's definition of violence while tacitly refusing to condemn state-sanctioned violence. Kairos challenges:

How can acts of oppression, injustice and domination be equated with acts of resistance and self-defense? Would it be legitimate to describe both the physical force used by the rapist and the physical force used by a woman trying to resist the rapist as violence? ... To call physical force "violence" or "self-defense" depends upon which side you are on.

BT: *In the past several years, the U.S. government has tried to suppress the Sanctuary movement in a variety of ways. How do you analyze the government strategy in relation to Sanctuary?*

MM & RG: One of the things that was just discovered recently was an FBI/INS strategy document that came to light through a Freedom of Information Act request by an individual in Minneapolis. It was called a "Strategic Assessment of the Sanctuary Movement" which dated back to 1983. I think it shows that the government has been concerned about the Sanctuary movement which I think relates to being able to tell the story of Central America from the viewpoint of the people who are being bombed and oppressed as opposed to from the viewpoint of the Pentagon and the State Department.

I think we've seen a series of tactics tried against the Sanctuary movement. The first, in 1983, was to ignore it and hope it would go away and not give Sanctuary activists any more opportunity to speak to the press or become martyrs. We feel here that when the arrests happened in Texas in early '84 they were not so much planned as more kind of a mistake; but once they had happened the

INS seemed committed to follow through on it. That was the arrest of Stacey Merkt and Jack Elder. In Chicago about three weeks after those arrests, we took a very public caravan to Weston Priory, Vermont. It was covered a lot by the press and we had an AP reporter with us for the journey. The INS was getting a lot of calls from the press at that point in '84—"Well, why aren't you arresting them? They're breaking the law." And it was soon after that that the U.S. government started Operation Sojourner, which was an infiltration of the Tucson folks and the people in Mexico.

similar to the old Cointelpro operations in the late '60s and '70s where break-ins of peace activists and so forth took place. Nothing of value was taken, but files were destroyed, membership lists and so forth. The very same thing happened with over a dozen Sanctuary churches and 40-50 Central America organizations. It seems that the primary purpose of that again was intimidation and trying to say we know who you are and you'd better stop.

After the Tucson trial, the government saw that it had really given more public play to the Sanctuary movement and that indictments were not a good strategy. During this



Salvadoran refugees and a Sanctuary worker in front of Sanctuary church in Chicago.

Credit: Steve Dalber

I think they felt they needed to do some infiltration and that's what led up to the larger Tucson trial, indictments in 1985 and then the trial in '85 and '86. I think at that point they determined that going after the activists, trying to get the leaders, would be a form of intimidation. It shows that they really didn't understand the movement; that it had been grassroots and there had been much more regional leadership. They felt they would be somehow stopping us by arresting and indicting Tucson people. Well, just the opposite effect happened. There were more people joining the movement. More people came to the Tucson conference—five times more than were expected after the arrests. So the intimidation really didn't work.

Another form of intimidation that has happened, particularly in '84 through '86, was a number of break-ins of Sanctuary churches, which were very suspicious and were

period of the trial and right afterward, they intensified their efforts to split the movement or to try to discredit part of the movement. During '85 and '86 there was a more intensive plan to discredit those who were "political." It bordered on and included red-baiting; it was trying to say that the political people were manipulating the humanitarian motives of Church people and were using refugees. All that kind of rhetoric was used by the INS and Elliot Abrams and those kind of people. And there was the right wing who also cooperated by doing studies. One by the Capital Research Associates concluded that the Sanctuary movement were groups of Marxist-Leninist cells who had developed clandestine capabilities and were not afraid to break the law and that they would turn into a threat to the national security and actually engage in "terrorist" activities.

It was enough to say that we were linked with a Marxist-Leninist insurgency in Guatemala and El Salvador. It played on a lot of xenophobic hysteria, especially around the border region. In Los Angeles, the INS director out there, Harold Izell, who's a fanatic right-winger, would go himself on raids and talked about "our children's future being at stake with the refugees coming across the border. We have to protect what's ours." Anti-immigrant groups developed in L.A. and Seattle to beat back Sanctuary resolutions in the cities and stir up anti-immigrant sentiment. And we saw more recently the issue with the Palestinians in Los Angeles who were arrested under the McCarren-Walter Act and said to be dangerous terrorists. We think this was really a test case in a lot of ways, given that the Palestinians are probably the most vulnerable of the immigrant groups in the United States, to see what the reaction would be.

Behind these actions is what is called Rex '84, devised in 1984 by FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency). This is a plan to be able to either deport or incarcerate or detain in detention centers around the country, up to 250-500,000 refugees and North American activists. This was seen as a way to control the population during a state of emergency, for example, an invasion of Central America.

BT: What do you think the government is up to right now?

MM & RG: We think right now we're in the phase of the government trying to coopt segments of the movement. We've seen in Tucson, for instance, that 50% of political asylum cases are being granted. That represents only about 12 cases for the last year, but it's still significant because in Tucson before none had ever been granted. Now the question is why is the government granting asylum in an area like Tucson? I think in order to blunt the Sanctuary movement. Because now many of the religious refugee workers are working with the INS, saying to refugees, "You have a pretty good chance, why don't you apply for political asylum." This 50% rate, of course, is not reflected nationwide—it's still around 2 to 2.5%—but it shows the ability of the government to select certain areas of the country to grant a higher rate. It's trying to coopt or moderate the Sanctuary movement, to take it away from its more cutting edge of resistance and more systemic criticism of the United States government in both its handling of refugees and its foreign policy. At this point the Sanctuary movement has not developed new strategy and tactics to respond to the government's more cooptational mode.



The INS has arrested and forced thousands of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees into detention camps.

BT: Well, what would be the correct response at this point?

MM & RG: In the anti-intervention movement or the Sanctuary movement, we've seen a dichotomy of analyses. There are people in the Sanctuary movement who consider themselves "humanitarians," who just want to help refugees. They don't want to talk about foreign policy, as if they could separate it out. There are those who see the treatment of refugees as more a procedural problem in the government. "Well, we have the laws on the books and it's not being carried out correctly. If there were better judges or the Reagan administration would just allow the system to work, it would be OK." I think people that have that analysis are easily coopted.

The same type of thing happened in the civil rights movement. Certain of the civil rights leaders were willing to follow an electoral or legislative path rather than really confronting the underlying issues of racism and the kind of economic imperialism existing in the United States against Black people.

On the other hand there've been people in the Sanctuary movement saying that what is happening in Central America and what's happening in the United States to refugees is really rooted in a deep history of U.S. domination of Latin America and its own peoples. It's rooted in racism but also certainly in an economic imperial policy that needs to control Central America and Latin America for the benefit of a few in the United States.

People are still being killed in El Salvador and Guatemala; the U.S. is still intervening. When the Sanctuary movement started in '82, there was about \$65 million in U.S. aid to El Salvador. Now we're talking about \$700 million. So in spite of the Sanctuary movement, we've seen a tenfold increase and that's just what's public—who knows how much covert or hidden money has been transferred to El Salvador. The government in some ways has said, "Well, we can just keep doing our policies. These folks can declare Sanctuary, you can have demonstrations; but we're continuing to funnel our aid and carry out our war pretty much undeterred." There are Congressional battles, but the issue of aid to El Salvador is a non-issue right now in the Congress. So to change that is going to require some very deep and confrontational action that really questions not only Reagan administration policies but the policies of the United States that have been shared by Republicans and Democrats.

BT: Recently the U.S. government has made two decisions which may have an impact on the situation of refugees here. In the first, the Supreme Court ruled that refugees only needed to show "probable cause" that they would be persecuted if they returned to their country of origin in order to receive "political refugee status." The second major action was the new amnesty program. What do you think the impact of these deci-

sions will be on Central American refugees and the Sanctuary movement?

MM & RG: Well, the Supreme Court decision from all indications is really not going to mean anything for Salvadorans and Guatemalans. In asylum cases, the State Department gives an advisory in every political asylum case and for the most part they deny asylum to Salvadorans and Guatemalans, again based on foreign policy concerns. Now the GAO [Government Accounting Office] did a study in 1984. In 100% of the cases of Salvadorans, INS changed their ruling to agree with the State Department. This Supreme Court ruling is not going to change the State Department's position. As far as the new immigration law, it's created a lot of fear and desperation among the refugee community here. That law, coupled with Canada's new more restrictive policies on refugees, has really given Salvadorans and Guatemalans a lot of tension and fear. The Canadian government has instituted a program where people still can get into Canada, but it's a much longer bureaucratic process. They have to wait six months. And the question is where are they going to wait?

BT: Several months ago, Duarte appealed to the U.S. government to extend "voluntary departure status" on Salvadoran refugees, which would have allowed them to stay in the U.S. indefinitely. The U.S. formally denied Duarte's request for this special status, but at the same time they indicated that they would not be vigorously pursuing Salvadoran refugees who were here illegally. What do you think is behind this and what impact will it have here?

MM & RG: At this point, the Reagan administration is facing somewhat of a contradiction in that Duarte and the right wing in El Salvador are saying "don't send all these Salvadoran refugees back." What may be developed is some way for them to stay here without the government saying that they're refugees in the sense of political refugees. The DeConcini-Moakley bill has certain language that does say the refugees face danger and a fear of persecution in returning home. The Reagan administration can't abide by that kind of language, so they're going to have to get rid of it and then perhaps allow them to stay. Because if they return, they are going to go toward the opposition forces, they're going to be more of a strain on the infrastructure, they're not going to be sending money back to El Salvador as additional foreign aid (which the University of Central America in San Salvador has estimated is \$1.3 billion a year, more than the U.S. has officially given.)

If the Salvadoran refugees are allowed to stay, then in effect they will have some sort of sanctuary. Guatemala is another case—and we've given refuge all along to Guatemalans in the Sanctuary movement.

But I think at this point that one of the strategies that the

Sanctuary movement needs to look at very seriously is accompaniment, sending North Americans down to accompany those Salvadorans who wish to repopulate the free-fire zone areas, the areas where they've been removed from. This would be a direct counter to the counterinsurgency strategy of cleaning out those areas.

BT: *Could you elaborate a bit more on accompaniment. Why is it developing at this time and what real role do you think North Americans can play in that?*

MM & RG: Accompaniment is traveling with the Salvadoran refugees as they go from Honduras back into El Salvador, from the city of San Salvador back out to repopulate and develop their old villages. I think accompaniment has really come from the people of Central

America. They have issued a call, particularly to the religious community, to accompany, walk with them in their journey back to repopulate those areas. And I think the Sanctuary movement needs to be very clear that this is an extension of the Sanctuary movement and that theologically and politically it is really the outgrowth of what we've been doing for five years.

The Salvadorans have organized themselves into new popular organizations; one is the Committee for National Repopulation; another is CRIPDES, which is another group of displaced; some are earthquake victims, who again have organized themselves. So these repopulations are controlled by the people who have been displaced. The Salvadoran army doesn't want them in some of those areas or they want to repopulate those people in strategic hamlets, where they can be controlled. So as these people are

repopulated, they want to set up villages that are not strategic hamlets, that are not under the control of the army, but under their own control. And they're seeking some guarantees from the government; they want the international presence to make sure that people are not abducted once they repopulate; that the army stays out and so forth. I think ultimately it's leading towards some kind of much more permanent presence of North Americans in those areas, much like Witness for Peace has done in Nicaragua.

Probably a hundred thousand North Americans have gone to Nicaragua in the last five years or so. This has made a difference. There've been people coming back and educating folks here about Nicaragua, and it's been harder to paint the Sandinistas as terrible people. If a hundred thousand North Americans had been to El Salvador, some of the same kind of ferment back home might be happening around El Salvador that's happened around Nicaragua.

Accompaniment is a very specific part of that. And it's dangerous. I mean you really do walk with the people and share some of their dangers; I think it's an act of solidarity equivalent to declaring Sanctuary. We feel very strongly that accompaniment should be seen as an act of Sanctuary as well—not just giving refuge in the United States, but going with them as an insurance policy or as an international witness, as they seek to repopulate and make El Salvador a sanctuary itself. We've said for years that the goal of the Sanctuary movement is not to create a thousand sanctuaries in the United States as much as to make El Salvador and Guatemala sanctuaries for their own people, so that the people can return. And that means stopping the war and stopping U.S. intervention. ■



In a challenge to the Duarte regime, thousands of Salvadoran refugees have planned an organized return to their homes in El Salvador from this refugee camp at Mesa Grande, Honduras.

BEHIND AQUINO'S FACADE



Documents from the Alliance for Philippine Concerns

We are pleased to reprint two documents from the Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC), a network of more than 50 organizations and numerous individuals in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The APC is fully committed to the struggle of the Filipino people towards social and economic justice, genuine democracy and national sovereignty. APC supports grassroots-based sectoral and cause-oriented organizations, opposes all forms of foreign intervention in the Philippines, and stresses campaigns and education leading to genuine social and political change in Philippine society.

As we go to press, the struggle in the Philippines is escalating sharply. On August 27, following the most successful mass mobilization to date against the repressive economic policies of the Corason Aquino government, RAM (Reform the Armed Forces Movement) attempted a military coup. While the attempt failed, the Aquino regime, now not much more than a civilian-military junta, has met almost all of their demands, moving sharply to the right in its repression of the cause-oriented movement. On September 19, Leandro "Lean" Alejandro, the young and dynamic leader of Bayan (the New Patriotic Confederation), was brutally assassinated, immediately following a news conference in which he denounced the government's moves towards fascism.

Despite these developments, many progressive people continue to be confused about the nature of the Aquino regime. To a great extent, Aquino is still seen as a democrat, not the front for U.S. counterinsurgency and low intensity conflict (L.I.C.) doctrine that she has become.

"Total war at the grassroots level" is how one Peniagon

strategist described this strategy. In Mindanao and other parts of the country, using U.S.-supplied helicopters and jets, the Armed Forces of the Philippines have bombed, strafed, and shelled civilian areas, prevented food and medical supplies from entering, and carried out widespread relocation of the population into strategic hamlets—all to "drain the fish from the sea" and eliminate the mass base of support for the armed insurgency. The U.S. is deeply involved in every aspect of this effort, including the organization of officially-sanctioned death squads, Alsa Masa and Nakasaka, which are responsible for widespread killings, torture and mutilations.

The economic interests of U.S. multinationals and the strategic importance of U.S. military bases have placed the stabilization of the Philippines high on the priority list, right alongside of Central America. Filipinos and North American activists who have visited the country recently, including ex-CIA analyst Ralph McGeehee, liken the situation to Vietnam prior to the full scale U.S. intervention. Yet, unlike the cases of Nicaragua and El Salvador, there is virtually no mass anti-intervention movement or sentiment around the Philippines.

In order to build a movement in solidarity with the Filipino people at this critical time, we need to understand much more clearly the nature of the U.S.-Aquino regime and the struggle being waged for land, justice and national sovereignty. The documents below are a contribution to that understanding. For more information about the situation in the Philippines, contact the Alliance for Philippine Concerns, P.O. Box 170219, San Francisco, CA 94117, (415) 540-5230.

CONDEMN THE ASSASSINATION OF LEANDRO ALEJANDRO!

September 21, 1987

We in the Alliance for Philippine Concerns condemn the assassination of Leandro Alejandro, Secretary General of BAYAN (New Patriotic Confederation). At the same time we mourn the passing of this tribune of the Filipino people, we must also lay the blame for his murder where it belongs: at the doorstep of the Corazon Aquino Government.

The Alejandro assassination is but the most recent act of a wide-ranging crackdown on the progressive, cause-oriented opposition. Leaders of grassroots organizations are now being hunted down throughout the country by the military with the full approval of President Corazon Aquino.

The Alejandro assassination comes a little over two weeks since the coup attempt by Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan. There is no doubt that the rebellious military faction headed by Col. Honasan is bent on imposing a military dictatorship and deserves to be condemned. But it is also clear that the Corazon Aquino Government no longer represents a genuine democratic alternative for the Filipino people.

Eighteen months after February 1986, the Aquino Government has betrayed the ideals and hopes of the people's uprising that brought it to power. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of human rights. From Cagayan Valley to Davao, the countryside is being ripped apart by repressive military operations in which innocent farmers are massacred, villages are burned, and whole communities are uprooted. Throughout the country, right-wing vigilante gangs are proliferating; at last count there were over fifty of them. President Aquino must bear a great part of the blame for this development, since she endorsed these groups as "extensions of people power."

The dismal state of human rights is but the most dramatic indicator of how far this government has strayed from the promises of the February 1986 uprising, of how much this government has become the opposite of the historic

people power movement. Instead of meeting the urgent needs of the people, she lets the burden fall on them. Her hollow land reform program, her failed economic policies, and her continued subservience to foreign interests show the absence of a genuine commitment to popular interests. Instead, like the Marcos dictatorship before it, it has become a client-regime of the United States.

However, should the current government fail to resolve its crisis, the Reagan Administration will not hesitate to impose other solutions. It may push Mrs. Aquino to accept a figurehead role in order to serve as a facade behind which Honasan and the Armed Forces of the Philippines wield real political power. Or it may dispense with Aquino altogether and assist in the formation of a military junta. In any case, one thing is certain: The Reagan Administration will likely interfere in order to preserve its interests. Secretary of State George Shultz has already publicly endorsed the CIA-endorsed vigilantes. More ominously, Richard Armitage, the Pentagon official dealing directly with the Philippines, has asserted that there is "little doubt that at the end of the day, military action will be required to defeat the insurgency."

Today, as we mourn the death of Leandro Alejandro and as we mark the 15th anniversary of the infamous declaration of martial law in the Philippines,

we—the Alliance for Philippine Concerns—urge the Filipino Community and the U.S. public to:

Condemn the Alejandro assassination and other human rights abuses under the Aquino government!
Stop the crackdown on the cause-oriented opposition in the Philippines!
Carry on the fight against fascism, militarism, and U.S. intervention in the Philippines!
Stop U.S. military aid to the Aquino government's fascist troops!



Leandro "Lean" Alejandro

Notes on the Current Situation in the Philippines

July 1987

KEY FEATURES OF THE AQUINO REGIME

In our view, the key features of the Aquino Government are the following:

*** It is a conservative regime dominated by the Philippine elite.** A year and a half after its ascent to power, the government's conservative character is crystal clear: most of the progressive or liberal democratic members of the Cabinet have been purged and replaced by conservative appointees. For instance, Franklin Drillon, a management specialist friendly with multinational and local firms, replaced Sanchez as Labor Minister, while Jaime Ferrer¹, a man with close ties to the CIA, took over as Minister of Local Government.

The conservative essence of the government is nowhere more evident than in the area of economic and social policy. Under the leadership of Finance Minister Jaime Ongpin, the regime has adopted the World Bank-IMF prescription to dismantle the protective barriers to foreign imports, a move which will accelerate the bankruptcy of hundreds of local entrepreneurs. The Constitution, drafted mainly by representatives of the upper classes, is a document which would be readily endorsed by Reagan's economic advisers, enshrining as it does private property and the free market as the fundamental principles of Philippine economic life. The document also liberalizes conditions for multinational corporations to penetrate strategic sectors of our economy, and hedges the right to strike with such qualifications as "the preferential use of voluntary modes of settling disputes" and strikes being called and conducted "in accordance with the law."

Eighteen months after she promised to institute a thoroughgoing land reform program, President Aquino's Executive Order 229, which was signed into law late July 1987, has left many, especially the Filipino peasants, furious. President Aquino's much awaited, and much vaunted, declaration leaves out key land reform provisions like retention limits of landlord holdings, land valuation and landlord compensation to the adjustments of the landlord-dominated Philippine Congress. Given this situation, Aquino's Executive Order 229 is but another sham land reform program which lacks a mandate to redistribute

landed estates and therefore fails to address the heart of any meaningful land reform program.

Serge Cherniguin, Secretary-General of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) in the island of Negros, sees the Executive Order on Land Reform as another blow to the cause of the peasants. "We feel betrayed. During her presidential campaign, President Aquino pledged genuine land reform and filled us with hope. Now we only feel anger. We see her initiative as only a 'paper' order. This is how President Aquino has responded to the cry of the poor."

It increasingly appears that the president herself does not believe in genuine land reform and considers it as a campaign promise that was made to be broken. Indeed, just a month after assuming office, she stated in an interview that justice in the countryside was "not so much a matter of distributing land but of enabling people to share profits. By sharing out the land, you only create more problems because sugar cultivation, for instance, is definitely uneconomic if carried out in small plots."

*** The government appears democratic, but this is only a facade for the reassertion of traditional elite rule.** The Philippines has recently undergone two exercises in electoral politics—a plebiscite on the new Constitution and elections to the new Congress—leading many local and foreign observers to proclaim the return and institutionalization of democracy in the Philippines.

What is being institutionalized, however, are the old processes of elite, patronage democracy, in which money and wealth determine who wins in elections and what "solutions" are allowed for pressing social and economic issues. The pro-elite bias of formal democracy was evident in the last Congressional elections: only the candidates who could amass a campaign chest of hundreds of millions of pesos could afford to rent the planes which would fly them all over the archipelago and buy the radio and television spots which would drill their names into the consciousness of voters. With so few resources, the candidates of the Alliance for New Politics, who represented the true interests of the people, could not even begin to get their names, much less their message, to the majority of voters.

Elite reformism, however, can have a dangerous lulling and demobilizing impact on the masses. By having the people go through the motions of democratic choice, the government can sow the illusion that substantive democracy has arrived and that elite electoral practices, instead of

¹ Jaime Ferrer was assassinated by unidentified gunmen August 2, 1987. In the 1950's, he served as an aide to then Col. Edward Lansdale—the late CIA operative who engineered the counterinsurgency efforts in the Philippines and Vietnam.

popular mobilizations, can serve as the avenue of genuine change. Also, the regime has misrepresented the progressive movement's preference for direct, grassroots mobilization for change as a rejection of peaceful change through democratic methods.

*** While the government attempts to legitimize its rule through formal democratic mechanisms, military repression continues to be an important means of political control.**

Even with considerable fractiousness and resentment in the officer corps—a mood which is expressed in various coup attempts—the mainstream of the military headed by AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Fidel Ramos appears to have reconciled itself to living with Mrs. Aquino as president.² And the military has succeeded in consolidating President Aquino in her rightward trend: the president's abandonment of any serious effort to prosecute human rights offenders during the Marcos period and under her administration; her tacit acceptance of the enormous political and economic privileges amassed by the military over 14 years; and her giving free rein to the AFP's terroristic methods of putting down the people's movement.

Initially, President Aquino and the military leadership disagreed on the methods of dealing with the people's movement. Aquino placed the stress on effecting a political and military surrender of the National Democratic Front through negotiations and on laying the "moral basis" for armed repression should this fail. The AFP, on the other hand, never deviated from its policy of immediate implementation of the "military solution."

Aquino and the military increasingly converged, however. Assessing that the "moral basis for unsheathing the sword of war" (to use her words before the U.S. Congress in September 1986) had been laid, the president in late March of this year asked the AFP for a "string of honorable military victories." Then, in mid-May, she publicly endorsed the vigilante groups that the military has been forming to terrorize pro-people activists and organizations at the grassroots.

During the first 13 months of the Aquino regime, human rights abuses by the military and vigilante groups continue unabated and have, in fact, increased. The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines documented 734 cases of illegal arrests and detention; 362 torture cases; 88 massacres; 58 cases of forced evacuations displacing more than 5,000 families; and 137 summary executions. Many more go unreported due to intimidation and harassment.

²The AFP is divided into (a) the Ramos faction which remains the largest and through which U.S. influence mainly flows; (b) Marcos loyalist individuals and officials; (c) Reform the Armed Forces (RAM)-Enrile faction; and (d) the pro-Aquino faction, including Minister Ileta and the Defense Ministry. Common among the factions is a diehard posture toward communism and counterinsurgency.

Mrs. Aquino's increasingly hawkish posture toward the NDF was paralleled by a hardening posture toward the whole cause-oriented opposition. The government's response to KMU's [May First Movement—Ed.] militant efforts to improve the lot of Philippine labor was to fire labor sympathizer Sanchez and hire management specialist Drillon as labor minister. And she consistently refused to meet with peasant delegations seeking land reform, despite repeated requests.

Thus, today, the Philippine political situation is marked by phenomena which are seemingly contradictory, but are actually complementary. On the one hand, an elite parliamentary system is being consolidated through plebiscites and elections. On the other hand, with some 80 battalions engaged in massive, brutal campaigns all over the countryside and vigilantes and death squads terrorizing ordinary citizens, the political climate today is more repressive and militarized than it was during the last years of Marcos. There is no contradiction: the electoral circuses are meant to disarm and demobilize the masses, to persuade them to pin their hopes for change on the elite electoral system; the military campaigns and death squads are intended for those who refuse to be taken in and continue to militantly agitate for change. Some observers have characterized this strategy as "total war."

THE U.S. AND THE AQUINO REGIME

Some progressive groups in the Philippines use the term "U.S.-Aquino Regime" to characterize this government. This is not without basis; the government in fact enjoys the hearty endorsement and full support of the Reagan administration.

Again, what a difference a year makes! In May of last year, President Aquino and her key advisers were telling the U.S. that they preferred economic to military aid, while Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was advising them that they needed military aid. Last month, the roles were reversed: Malacanang was urgently requesting 150 helicopters for counterinsurgency use from Washington and complaining that the U.S. had been tardy in delivering the military aid it promised last year, while the U.S. was apologizing for the budgetary constraints which had halved the promised \$100 million in military assistance.

The distance between Aquino and the U.S., so noticeable early in 1986, has all but vanished. Instrumental in this process was the removal from the cabinet of a competing power center who was also actively lobbying for U.S. support: former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. While Enrile was an "old friend" of the U.S., as Weinberger put it, he gradually came into disfavor for two reasons. First, his presidential ambitions prevented the new government from achieving a degree of political stability—Washington's principal aim in 1986. Second,

Enrile became an obstacle to another vital U.S. objective: that the military cease contending for formal political leadership and focus its efforts on combatting the New People's Army (NPA). Enrile had become the voice of a significant number of officers who wanted the military to directly exercise political power.

It was only after securing the "full support" of the U.S., relayed through Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, that Aquino fired Enrile as defense minister after several failed coup attempts in late November 1986. After another coup attempt in late January 1987, the U.S. delivered its strongest indictment yet of loyalist and military attempts to supplant Aquino via senior Pentagon official Richard Armitage:

Over the past year disaffected elements of the NAFP (New Armed Forces of the Philippines) disrupted the stability of the country by perpetrating a series of plots aimed at destabilizing the Aquino government....Whatever their intentions, their actions threatened Philippine democracy and, to the extent that their actions added to the sense of instability, they unwittingly furthered the cause of their communist rivals. We categorically condemn any and all attempts to destabilize the legitimate government of the Republic of the Philippines.

U.S. support for Aquino was reciprocated. The hand-picked Constitutional Commission drafted a provision which would empower the president to negotiate a new treaty that would extend the tenure of the U.S. bases beyond 1991, when the current lease expires.

Another positive fallout for the U.S. was greater influence over the government's counterinsurgency program, which had provoked some disagreement from the Pentagon because of its emphasis on negotiations. The appointment of Gen. (Ret.) Rafael Ileto as defense minis-

ter to replace Enrile brought to the top of the country's military-civilian hierarchy a staunchly pro-U.S. counterinsurgency expert, a man who had founded the Philippine Scout Rangers and worked with Col. Edward Lansdale, the CIA operative who managed the counterinsurgency campaign against the Huks in the 1950s. With Ileto as defense minister and Ramos, another U.S. favorite, as AFP chief of staff, the U.S. seemed to have the perfect team to front the counterinsurgency effort since both were U.S.-trained, were considered professionals, and enjoyed the reputation of being "incorruptible."

Indeed, by early 1987, other members of the old Lansdale team had landed in key positions within the government: Ret. Gen. Luis Villareal, a notorious "Huk Hunter," became head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Authority (NICA), while Jaime Ferrer, another graduate of the Lansdale school, became Minister of Local Government.

U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY

Though there are no U.S. group troops fighting the NPA at this point in time, the U.S. is directly and heavily involved in what is now termed "low intensity conflict" (LIC) in the Philippines. This involvement takes the following forms:

Psychological Warfare and Propaganda. Perhaps the most dramatic indicator of the importance which the U.S. attaches to this area of counterinsurgent warfare is the Reagan administration's recent authorization of a ten percent increase in CIA personnel attached to the U.S.



Members of "Tadtad" (literally Chop-chop), one of the NAKASAKA vigilante groups endorsed by President Aquino.

Embassy in Manila and a \$10 million budget for surveillance and covert action. Some of the CIA involvement is likely to be in the areas of computerizing military and police files on the progressive movement and the fanning of anti-communist hysteria via "Red Scare" stories planted in the mass media. The CIA's hand is also suspected in the recent proliferation of death squads.

Civic Action. An important part of counterinsurgency is "civic action," or the effort to give the U.S. and the AFP a new image by portraying it as performing benign duties like road construction and medical care. Currently, the Pentagon is providing bulldozers and other engineering equipment to the Philippine Army; U.S. military planes are shipping aid commodities from private right-wing organizations to the Philippines; the civic actions component of joint U.S.-Philippine military maneuvers is being enlarged; and civic action operations around the U.S. bases are being stepped up in an effort to defuse the strong NPA presence in those areas. Also, in April and May 1987, the USS Mercy, a U.S. Navy hospital ship, visited seven Philippine ports to "provide medical care" to both civilians and military personnel.

Military Assistance. Psychological warfare, death squads, and civic action may be important, but "at the end of the day," says Pentagon official Armitage, the NPA will have to be defeated in the field of battle. Military assistance and military training continue to be the cornerstone of the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in the Philippines.

In fiscal year 1987, the U.S. Congress removed Marcos-era restrictions on "lethal equipment" that could be delivered to the AFP. Over the course of the year, \$64 million—the highest volume of security assistance deliveries in the last five years—reached the Philippines.

Most of the deliveries were not heavy weaponry or sophisticated aircraft, but items which would enable the AFP to "move, shoot, and communicate" in irregular counter-guerrilla war, including ten refurbished Vietnam-era helicopters and 665 trucks.

Special Warfare Units. Two U.S. special warfare units are poised to assist the AFP in counter-guerrilla activities: the Air Forces' Special Operations Squadron based at Clark and the Navy's SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) team at Subic, which is the largest forward deployed SEAL unit. The SEALs are already training Filipino troops in "riverine" anti-guerrilla operations.

The Right-Wing Network. As the public hearings on the Iran-Contra affair have revealed, the network of right-wing private organizations has played a critical role in carrying out the Reagan administration's policies in Central America. Some of the same cast of characters are also active in the Philippines: Gen. John Singlaub, head of the World Anti-Communist League; "Causa," the political arm of the Unification Church headed by Rev. Sun Myung

Moon; and the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade.

In the case of the Philippines, the private right has been busy distorting the image and programs of the progressive forces in the Philippines. In fact, it is sometimes far ahead of U.S. government agencies in this respect. The role model of many right-wing propagandists is Time correspondent Russ Munro, whose December 1985 article in Commentary, "The New Khmer Rouge," sought to paint the NPA as bloodthirsty fanatics through the techniques of innuendo, half-truth, and bare-faced fabrication.

Following Munro's footsteps, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade led by John Whitehall and the Heritage Foundation have waged an hysterical propaganda campaign against the Philippine progressive movement. One of the targets of the right-wing anti-communist campaign is the progressive Church network, especially Task Force Detainees.

Aside from smearing the international image of the Philippine progressive movement and progressive Church, the private right has also taken the lead in attacking the solidarity movement. For instance, in typical McCarthyist fashion, the Heritage Foundation recently "revealed" scores of U.S. and other groups as "fronts of the NDF and Communist Party (CPP)."

In sum, the U.S. is heavily involved, either directly or via the international right-wing network, in counterinsurgency in the Philippines. In many respects, this involvement appears to be greater than it was under Marcos.

If not for the pristine image of Corazon Aquino, it is not difficult to decipher the destructiveness of the U.S.-Aquino regime in its continued plunder of the Philippines. It shares, with previous puppet regimes including Marcos', the same objective of maintaining foreign and local elite interests to the detriment of the majority of the Filipino people. The dual tactic of repression and deception is still employed, albeit to a fine science thanks to the handicraft of current U.S. counterinsurgency strategies. The net effect of all of this is that the true nature of the Aquino government, its anti-people character and its repressive apparatus, comfortably hides behind a shield of popularity and international adulation.

As people who identify with the interests of the majority of the Filipino people, and who are for a just and human U.S. foreign policy towards the Philippines, our urgent task is to unmask the U.S.-Aquino regime by telling the stories of workers killed at the picket line, peasants displaced from the land, the urban poor bulldozed out of their shanties, and of the millions of Filipinos who are struggling for peace, justice and national sovereignty. We need to build a broad and vigilant anti-intervention movement to challenge and reverse the dangerous course of U.S. foreign policy.

The need is urgent; the consequences are grave. We in the Alliance for Philippine Concerns enjoin all those concerned to participate in the historic struggle of the Filipino people.

Speech to the First Congress of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueño



The following speech was delivered by Nancy Kurshan of PFOC to the 1st Congress of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueño (MLN-PR), held in Chicago on July 3-5, 1987. For ten years, the MLN has organized in the U.S. for Puerto Rican independence. Their Congress, which was attended by hundreds of people, showed once again that the MLN is one of the most dynamic forces in the Puerto Rican independence movement.

We're very happy and honored to be here today at the first congress of the MLN. What better way to celebrate "independence day" than to demand independence for Puerto Rico and all the colonized nations that exist within this so-called United States. How right it feels to be *here* rededicating ourselves to revolutionary ideology and principles as the U.S. tries and fails once again to recapture its imperial grandeur.

We were asked to give our analysis of the North American left in the U.S. This was to include what is going on now, what changes have occurred in the last couple of years and how we, as white anti-imperialists, should

respond to the changes.

Obviously, this is a tall order for such a brief period of time. So we'll just try to touch on several areas of work. Hopefully, this discussion will be a preliminary for longer ones in the future.

Ten years ago some of us participated in another MLN conference—the first one—organized to fight repression. At the time, 11 Puerto Ricans and Mexicans—many of them leaders of the MLN—were in jail for refusing to collaborate with a federal grand jury investigating the FALN. The conference was called at a time when the majority of the left was not only refusing to support the grand jury resisters, but was also busy denouncing the FALN as either ultra-left adventurists at best, or CIA agents at worst! Ten years later the MLN's stand has been vindicated.

The 1977 conference with its revolutionary politics, its defense of non-collaboration, and its commitment to the armed movement, flew in the face of what was considered to be *acceptable* to the left.

It was at this conference that we solidified a relationship already in progress with revolutionary forces inside the Puerto Rican independence movement itself. It was there that we first heard the great Puerto Rican revolutionary

leader Don Juan Antonio Corretjer—who struggled with us to understand more deeply the role of the armed clandestine organizations and the nature of the U.S. state in Puerto Rico. And it was there that we understood that the Puerto Rican revolution plays a unique and strategic role—not only in terms of liberation for the Puerto Rican people but in pushing forward a revolutionary process in this country as well.

It was there that many of us also first heard from our Mexican comrades the concept of a united socialist Mexico—north and south of the imperialist-created false border.

For us in Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, the conference was the beginning of a long, challenging and ever-growing relationship with the MLN. It showed us one of the basic strengths of the MLN's leadership: the willingness—despite all odds—to stick to their principles. The belief that, even when it seems to be completely unpopular, this commitment to anti-imperialism will eventually grow and flourish among the people.

This has been both the hardest and most important lesson for us to learn and maintain.

It's meant remaining steadfast in our belief that the U.S. is a white settler colonial empire made up of oppressor and oppressed nations—a system founded on white supremacy and privilege that can and will only be destroyed through the winning of land and independence for New Afrikan, Puerto Rican, Mexican and Native nations. It's meant understanding that the struggle for socialism here will take place only within this context—the destruction of the federal state. Anti-imperialism has meant understanding the role of male supremacy and remaining ever-committed to the fight for women's liberation and against sexism and gay oppression. It's meant continuing to build communist organization to struggle for all this—despite the frustrations, mistakes and setbacks along the way. And finally, anti-imperialism has meant that we understand that the U.S. state is our enemy—as it is the enemy of all the world's people. And that armed struggle here is a legitimate and necessary part of revolution—as it is everywhere else in the world.

Concretely, this means maintaining our commitment to *all* those who fight—whether from clandestinity or from behind the bars as P.O.W.s and political prisoners. When the state places anti-imperialists like Claude Marks and Donna Wilmot* on the Ten Most Wanted List (as they did last June) they should know that our organization and all of us in this room will not back off from defending them. If we have learned anything from the MLN, it is to stand fast in the face of intimidation and FBI harassment. There will be a lot of doors slamming in the faces of the FBI agents in our community as well.

Sometimes we have put our principles forward well, other times we have not. We have often felt isolated and embattled, and have responded with our own brand of arrogance and/or sectarianism. None the less, we would have to say that the maintenance of our politics is what has

allowed us to change and grow, and what has brought us here today.

We can't consider ourselves to be anti-imperialists unless we consciously challenge both the history and current overwhelming rise of white supremacy in this country. The fact is that the conditions for Black people today are *worse* than they were 20 years ago. We need to recognize the reality that Black people are a colonized nation and break with the view of Amerika as a "melting pot." For one thing we know—which is as true now as it was 20 years ago—is that the power of the Black liberation struggle will move millions to confront what life is really about in the U.S. of A.

Howard Beach, the acquittal of Bernhard Goetz and the activities of the KKK are only the latest evidence of the deep racist divisions that characterize this society. And, fueled by the need to confront them, a whole new generation of New Afrikan youth is being organized to revolutionary nationalism. In the places where this activity is the strongest, anti-racist whites are being challenged to not only oppose racism, but to support self-determination of Black people as well.

Here in Chicago, anti-racist work has shown that many people (both political veterans and new people) *want* to fight against white supremacy. One of our jobs is to help develop forms for people to express their anger, outrage and belief that the Klan has no right to exist. At the same time, we need to educate about the history and current realities of Black revolutionary nationalism. We have learned that it is both possible and necessary to carry out the work at different levels and utilize a variety of tactics in order to create an oppositional alternative.

We have just begun really. And yet we can say this is the first year since 1982 that the Klan has *not* rallied on Gay Pride Day. In the face of all of the organizing efforts of many of the people here, the Klan backed out from marching in Guernsey, Illinois this June.

We have also been a part of the fight against institutions of government-sponsored white supremacy. By this I mean the U.S. prison system. We have seen, through the efforts of many in this room, that hundreds of people can be mobilized to oppose the modern-day Alcatraz at Marion Federal Penitentiary.

Every day we see the dirty laundry of the Reagan administration hanging out there in the Iran-Contra hearings. And despite the obsequious, sanitized questioning going on, some of the truth is leaking out. The machinations, drug dealings, terrorism of the U.S. government, the covert actions of the CIA, are inching their way into public view.

Let's be clear. The underlying reason for all the debate

defeating this bunch of thugs and criminals. The Sandinista Revolution has sent U.S. Central American policy into a tailspin.

Then, too, the FMLN in El Salvador is proving that the U.S., despite all its massive aid, bombs and advisors, cannot stop another popular revolution from advancing. Instead of being able to implement counterinsurgency, Duarte's government is headed towards dissolution and crisis.

These developments are producing challenges as well as opportunities. Take the April 25th mobilizations, for example. True, there was no mention of the Middle East, the barest mention of Puerto Rico, and last minute pressure from labor officials forced cancellation of the speaker from Nicaragua. But that wasn't the whole picture. What was striking was the range of different people—young, old, many women, people coming from small towns and cities, from college campuses—many to their first national demonstration.

At Langley, 1500 people—mostly young, many students—confronted the CIA with civil disobedience and direct action. Hundreds marched miles to a gate the CIA wanted kept open. Similarly, this past June in California, 2,000 people attempted to block arms shipments from Concord Naval Weapons Station to El Salvador. Hundreds were arrested and hundreds more participated in a militant direct action in which a replica of a Salvadoran village was built and chained to the railroad tracks to block munitions trains, while other protesters carried 500 lb. abandoned rails and dumped them over the tracks and in front of the entrances to the base.

Some would say these are isolated instances. But we would disagree! There is a growing anger about the terrorist war in Central America and a growing solidarity with revolutionary process in Nicaragua and with the armed struggle in El Salvador. These, combined with Contragate, mean that more people are no longer just willing to sit politely by and hope that congress will come to the rescue!

This doesn't mean that there has been a sharp break with a reliance on electoral politics. Or that the strategic questions of Puerto Rico or Black liberation are now on the movement's agenda. Nor does it mean that most people are questioning the idea that the only legitimate tactic is that of non-violence. But that's only stating the obvious. In the past, we might have looked at all this and adopted an arrogant and disrespectful attitude. But we've learned that if we stand aside and criticize from afar, we not only avoid our own responsibility to stand with the people of Central America, but we'll also isolate anti-imperialist politics from a new generation of potential fighters and activists. And we need to draw the connections of how U.S. policy in Central America fits in with the larger picture of the American empire. The issue of Puerto Rico is critical in all this. Because if the movement doesn't deal with Puerto Rico, we end up both ignoring its strategic position and abandoning our responsibility to condemn colonialism here at home.

A lot of us who are old enough like to remember the sixties. We remember the militancy and the identification of the U.S. as the enemy. The heightened consciousness of people around white and male supremacy. The willingness of more people to take risks.

But let's also remember something else. We were not victorious as white anti-imperialists in the sixties. Our movement was neither able to sustain mass anti-imperialist organizations, communist formations nor armed clandestine organizations. In other words, for all its strengths, the sixties had a lot of weaknesses which we still have not overcome to this day.

And that's what we're trying to figure out today. For we know we can't wage revolution or build a movement without the people. And we also know we can't be too far ahead, nor can we be content to tail behind. We have to participate in struggle around the issues that are so central to our principles and analysis, and which therefore lend themselves to anti-imperialist organizing.

There's been a great deal of discussion at this conference about women. As many people know, this is a subject dear to our hearts. We are struggling to redefine a revolutionary feminism and to rebuild an anti-imperialist women's movement.

We walk down the streets every day and feel the hatred of this women-hating society. We know only too well that violence against women is ever-rising. We are enraged by the fact that our rights to abortion are being threatened, just as we see how sterilization abuse and population control are being used as genocide elsewhere. And our anger grows when we see that our children's lives are being threatened by ignorance, bad health care, alcohol and drug abuse.

We see, too, that our movement has all but abandoned its ideas of combatting male supremacy. That women's leadership is neither consciously fought for nor encouraged. That the role of lesbians in spearheading this fight is neither acknowledged nor supported, that women's caucuses have all but disappeared. Women's oppression is too often reduced to an individual problem, leaving many women isolated. And we know that this is something that we can help change.

We always have to acknowledge the real differences between ourselves and our sisters in the oppressed nations. But we've seen the openness of many women to understand these differences and to learn from the multitude of women's experiences and organizations around the world.

Finally, we can't end without talking about the plague that is now beginning to haunt many of our lives. For many, the specter of AIDS has until quite recently seemed quite far away; for others it's been something affecting

"We can't consider ourselves to be anti-imperialists unless we consciously challenge both the history and current overwhelming rise of white supremacy in this country."



Demonstration against police murders in Richmond, CA, 1983.

seemed quite far away; for others it's been something affecting our deepest emotions. The combination of deep homophobia and widespread ignorance and fear has made it an issue that many people haven't wanted to deal with.

But we have to. Already, they want mandatory testing for immigrants and prisoners. Already they've allowed millions of Africans to be infected and to die. Already, there's been too little, too late in terms of research and resources, so that thousands of gay men have been and will be killed. Already we know that they could care less about the state of health in the Black and Latin communities so that thousands are being killed there as well.

How ironic that gay people are blamed for spreading AIDS, while it is the gay community which has taken primary responsibility to confront this epidemic and *prevent* its spread. In major cities throughout the country, where AIDS has taken its greatest toll, gay people have organized to educate their communities about safe sex. People are helping each other, building support networks and fighting back against the malign neglect of the State. We have a great deal to learn from their example and we *must* join this battle.

One of the greatest lessons that we've learned from our history with the Puerto Rican independence movement is the importance of maintaining our humanity. Why else do we struggle? Why else do we bother to challenge and change ourselves?

AIDS will test all of our humanity in the years ahead. It will test our sense of collectivity and our commitment to

the resilience of the human spirit.

We know that by being political we can realize our humanity to the greatest extent. We only have to look to the examples of our friends and comrades, locked up behind the walls of the dungeons to see just how resilient political commitment and the human spirit really is. Let us reflect on their strength and determination. Let us think of Geronimo Pratt, Haydée Torres, Tom Manning, Judy Clark, Helen Woodson—just some of those who have been held in solitary and/or locked down for 23 1/2 hours a day. Let us remember our sisters Susan Rosenberg, Silvia Baraldini and Alejandrina Torres locked up in the cold basement of the Lexington Control Unit.

Let's think of all the political prisoners and prisoners of war while we are here today. Let's make sure their strength, their determination, and their humanity are heard about everywhere in our movement.

For it is in this very combination of commitment, politics and humanity that we see the possibilities for changing all the institutions and structures that oppress us and the world's people. This is the lesson of the MLN, this is the power of the Puerto Rican independence movement and all the liberation movements around the world. It's here in this combination of vision and action that we see the possibilities for creating socialism; it is here that we see our ability to participate in the destruction of U.S. imperialism itself.

Write Through the Walls

The U.S. government says that there are no political prisoners or POWs in this country. Yet the partial list below shows this claim is a complete lie. We urge you to write them and to send literature. These women and men represent the best of the movement. Make their struggle your struggle. "The Real Dragon" sponsors a continuing book drive to political prisoners and POWs. For more information or to send contributions write: PO Box 3294, Berkeley, CA 94703-9901. Please keep us updated on address corrections and information on transfers and releases.

Puerto Rican Prisoners of War

William Guillermo Morales
Apartado Postal 20-853
Col. San Angel
Mexico 20 DF, MEXICO

Ricardo Jimenez 88967-024
Alberto Rodriguez 92150-024
Edwin Cortes 92153-024
PO Box 1000
Lewisburg PA 17837

Carlos Alberto Torres 88976-024
902 Renfro
Talladega AL 35160

Alejandrina Torres 92152-024
HSU Lexington
Box 2000
Lexington KY 40512

Luis Rosa NO2743
Box 711
Menard IL 60434

Elizam Escobar 88969-024
PO Box 1500
El Reno OK 73036

Alicia Rodriguez NO7157
PO Box C
Dwight IL 60420

Oscar Lopez Rivera 87651-024
71 Van Buren
Chicago IL 60605

Adolfo Matos 88968-024
PO Box 1000
Lompoc CA 93436

Haydee Torres 88462-024
Lucy Rodriguez 88973-024
Dylcia Pagan 88971-024
Carmen Valentin 88974-024
5701 8th Street
Camp Parks
Dublin CA 94566

Puerto Rican Political Prisoners

Filiberto Ojeda Rios 03167-069
Juan Enrique Segarra Palmer 15357-077
Hartford FDC
PO Box 1178
Hartford, CT 06101

Julio Veras y Degadillo 00799-069-E-3
PO Box 1000
Petersburg VA 23803

New Afrikan/Black Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners

Kalima Aswad B24120
s/n Robert Duren
PO box 8108 Dorm 13-H
San Luis Obispo CA 93409-0001

Mutulu Shakur 83205-012
150 Park Row
New York NY 10007

Albert Nuh Washington 77-A-1528
Jalil A. Muntaqin 77-A-4283
s/n Anthony Bottom
Adbul Majid 83-A-483
s/n Anthony LaBorde
Robert Seth Hayes 74-A-2280
Drawer B
Stormville NY 12582

Basheer Hameed 82-A-6313
s/n James York
Herman Bell 79-A-262
PO Box 7000
Walkkill, NY 12589

Richard D. Moore
Box A.G.
Fallburg, NY 12733

Mohaman Koti 80-A-808
135 State St.
Auburn, NY 13023-9000

Jah s/n Teddy Heath 75-A-0139
PO Box 149
Attica NY 14100

Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt B40319
San Quentin Prison
Tamal CA 94974

Kazi Toure
s/n Chris King
Cambridge City Jail
40 Thomdike St.
Cambridge, MA 02141

Cecilio Chui Ferguson
FCI
PO Box 1000
Lewisburg PA 17837

Watani Tyehimba
PO Box 7 Terminal Island
San Pedro CA 90731

Sundiata Acoli 39794-066
s/n Clark Squire
Sekou Odinga 05228-054
s/n Nathaniel Burns
PO Box 1000
Leavenworth, KS 66048

Richard Thompson-EI #20080-101
James "Blood" Miller #00124-054
PO Box 1000
Marion IL 62959

Mondo Langa
s/n David Rice
PO Box 2500
Lincoln NE 68502-0500

Johnny Imani Harris 2-373s
Sekou Kambui
s/n William Turk
Holman Prison Unit
Atmore AL 36503

Richard Mafundi Lake 79972
100 Warrior Lane
Bessemer AL 35023

Kojo Bomani Sababu #39384-66
s/n Grailing Brown
71 W. Van Buren
Chicago IL 60605

Mark Cook 20025-148(H)
3901 Klein Blvd.
Lompoc CA 93438
Awali Stoneham B-98168
Soledad CA 93960

Ruchell Cinque Magee A92051
Hugo Pinell A88401
Haki Malik Abdullah C-56123
s/n Michael Green
Represa CA 95671

Isma-El Rahim #67-A-112
s/n Alfred Monroe
135 State Street
Auburn NY 13024-9000

Maliki Shakur Latine #81-A-4469
PO Box 338
Napanoch, NY 12458

Ed Poindexter
Minnesota Corr. Fac.
Stillwater MN 55082
Thomas Warner M 3049
Drawer R
Huntington PA 16652

Martin Rutrell #042600
UCI 68-2018 Box 221
Raiford FL 32083

Sababu Na Uhuru #07350-016
s/n William Stoner
PO Box 1000
Milan MI 48160

Rikke Green #84244
PO Box 97
McAlester OK 74502

Move Prisoners

Debbie Sims Africa #6307
Consusuela Dotson Africa
Ramona Johnson Africa #7564
Alberta Wicker Africa
Sue Savino Africa
Janine Phillips Africa
Merle Austin Africa #6306
Janet Holloway Africa
PO Box 180
Muncy PA 17756

Charles Sims Africa #M4975
Delbert Orr Africa #M4985
Carlos Perez Africa #M7400
Drawer K
Dallas, PA 18612

William Phillips Africa #4986
Edward Goodman Africa #4974
PO Box 200
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Mumia Abu Jamal
Michael Hill Africa
Drawer R
Huntington, PA 16652

Native American Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners

Leonard Peltier 89637-132
PO Box 1000
Leavenworth KS 66048

Standing Deer 83947
s/n Robert Hugh Wilson
E. Block Box 97
McAlester OK 74501

Rita Silk Nauni
Box 11492
Oklahoma City OK 73136
David Sohapp, Sr. #12864-086
PO Box 19121
Spokane, WA 99216

North American Political Prisoners

Marilyn Buck
150 Park Row
New York NY 10007

Kathy Boudin 84-G-171
Judy Clark 83-G-313
247 Harris Road
Bedford Hills NY 10507

Laura Whitehorn #22432-037
Linda Evans #F-11337/5-11-47
5701 8th St., Camp Parks
Dublin, CA 94565

David Gilbert 83-A-6158
135 State Street
Auburn NY 13024-9000

Alan Berkman 85-10404
c/o Committee to Fight Repression
P.O. Box 1435, Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10007

Silas Trim Bissell #56424-065
3600 Guard Rd.
Lompoc, CA 93436

Susan Rosenberg 03684-016
Silvia Baraldini 05125-054
HSU Lexington
Box 2000
Lexington KY 40511

Timothy Blunk 09429-050
PO Box 1000
Marion IL 62959

Richard Picariello 05812
PO Box 100
South Walpole MA 02071

Ed Mead #251397
P.O. Box 777
Monroe WA 98272

Ohio 7

Thomas Manning 10373-016
Richard Williams 10377-016
Barbara Curzi-Laaman 18213-053
Patricia Gros 18212-053
Jaen Laaman 10372-016
Raymond Levasseur 10376-016
Carol Manning 10375-016
PO Box 1178
Hartford, CT 06101

Ploughshares/Disarmament Prisoners

Fr. Carl Kabat 03230-045 FCI
PO Box 1000
Milan MI 48160

Richard Miller 15249-077
PO Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Helen Woodson 03231-045
c/o C. Dixon
622 Water St.
Ashland, WI 54806

Jean Gump #03789-045
Box A
Alderson VA 27910

Larry Morlan #03788-045
PO Box 1000
Marion, IL 62959

Vancouver 4

Doug Stewart
Matsqui Medium Institution
Box 4000
Abbotsford, BC, CANADA V2S4P3

Ann Hansen
Prison for Women
Box 515
Kingston, ONT, CANADA K7L4W7

Gerry Hannah
Box 4000 Stn. A
Victoria, BC, CANADA V8X3Y8

Bren Taylor
PO Box 190
Kingston, ONT, CANADA K7L4V9

Irish Prisoners

Joseph Doherty 07792-0545
MCC-9 South
150 Park Row
New York, NY 10007

Gabriel Megahey 04679-054
PO Box 1000
Otisville, NY 10969

They Tell Us to Wait

They tell us to wait.
They say only queers are dying.
Queers and junkies.
Those who deserve to live
are not at risk.
The epidemic is not yet out of control.

They tell us they are concerned.
They are not concerned about
the lives that have been lost.
They are concerned because
they are not sure they can control
who will die next.
They are concerned about
the loss of productivity,
about insurance payments.
They are calculating the costs.

They tell us they are concerned
but they show no concern for
the millions of infected Africans
whose graves they have dug
with their civilizing influence.
They have not yet calculated the priority
of saving African lives.

They tell us
AIDS is affecting
Blacks and Puerto Ricans.
They show us the faces of
dying addicts.
They tell us to feel pity.
They utter words like
horrible
tragic
a waste of human life.
They omit the word
genocide.

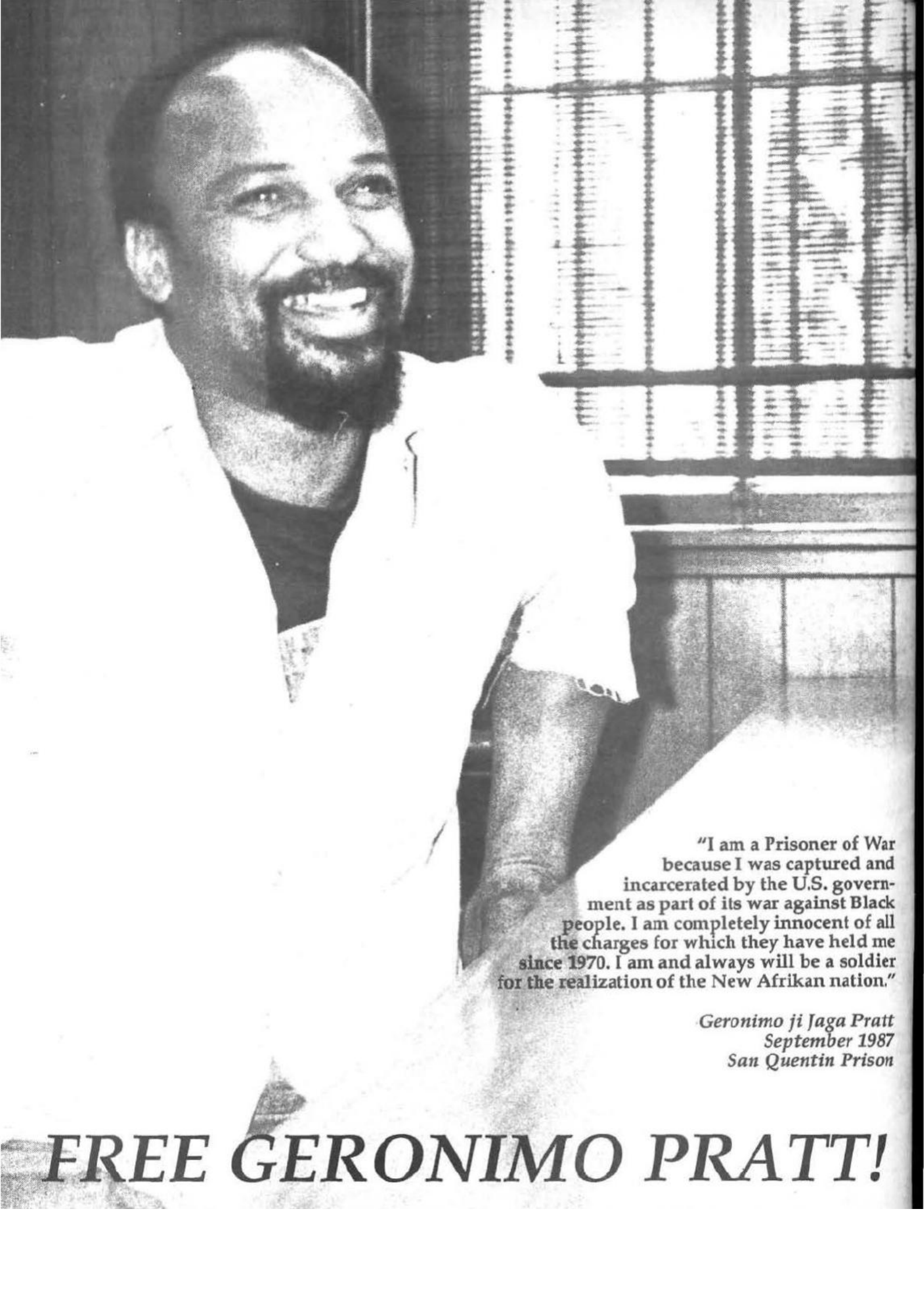
They tell us they cannot tell us
about safe sex.
It makes them uncomfortable
to admit that human beings
are sexual
and that gay sexuality is human.
They would rather we die.
They tell us
we have committed a
crime against nature,
god is punishing us.
They tell us abstinence is safe.
They tell us to wait
until we get married.

They tell us when
we will die,
twelve months, perhaps two years.
They do not tell us how to survive
how to be strong, healthy
how to change our lives.
They tell us to wait
until research scientists
develop a cure.
They hand out placebos to
guarantee the scientific integrity
of their research.
They do not do
research on drugs that offer no hope
of profit.

They tell us to wait
but we are tired of waiting.
We are tired of being told.
We are tired of funerals.
Let the cold silence
of the grave
claim the ones who feed on human
misery,
the ones who calculate who
will live and who will die.
They have bred many enemies.
We remember what they have told us.
We will loosen their grip.
We will reclaim the humanity
they have wasted.
We will survive.

—camomile





"I am a Prisoner of War because I was captured and incarcerated by the U.S. government as part of its war against Black people. I am completely innocent of all the charges for which they have held me since 1970. I am and always will be a soldier for the realization of the New Afrikan nation."

*Geronimo ji Jaga Pratt
September 1987
San Quentin Prison*

FREE GERONIMO PRATT!